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THE WORLD'S BEST POEMS

☆

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CONTENTS

CHINESE

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
FROM THE SHI KING (Compiled c. 500 B. C.)		
The Morning Glory	*Helen Waddell*	1
How Goes the Night?	*Helen Waddell*	1
I Wait my Lord	*Helen Waddell*	2
The Pear-Tree	*Allen Upward*	2
You Will Die	*H. A. Giles*	3
ANONYMOUS (c. 124 B. C.)		
Fighting South of the Castle	*Arthur Waley*	3
TSO SSU (3rd century)		
The Scholar in the Narrow Street	*Arthur Waley*	4
CHAN FANG-SHENG (4th century)		
Sailing Homeward	*Arthur Waley*	5
T'AO CH'IEN (365-427)		
Shady, Shady	*Arthur Waley*	5
EMPEROR CH'IEN WEN-TI (6th century)		
Lo-Yang	*Arthur Waley*	6
LI T'AI-PO (701-762)		
The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter	*Ezra Pound*	6
Clearing at Dawn	*Arthur Waley*	7
TU FU (712-770)		
The Excursion	*Amy Lowell and Florence Ayscough*	8
PO CHÜ-I (772-846)		
Lodging with the Old Man of the Stream	*Arthur Waley*	9
Remembering Golden Bells	*Arthur Waley*	9
YÜAN CHEN (779-831)		
The Pitcher	*Arthur Waley*	10
SU TUNG-P'O (1036-1101)		
On the Birth of His Son	*Arthur Waley*	11
LUI CHI (1311-1375)		
A Poet Thinks	*E. Powys Mathers*	11

JAPANESE

FROM THE MANYO SHU (compiled 8th century)		
Princess Daihaku (7th century)	*Arthur Waley*	13
Prince Yuhara (7th century)	*Arthur Waley*	13
Okura (660-733)	*Arthur Waley*	13
The Priest Hakutsu (c. 704)	*Arthur Waley*	14

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
Yakamichi (d. 785)	*Arthur Waley*	14
The Lady of Sakanoye (8th century)	*Arthur Waley*	14
FROM THE KOKIN SHU (compiled 9th century)		
Ono No Komachi (834-880)	*Arthur Waley*	15
Fujiwara No Toshiyuki (d. 907)	*Arthur Waley*	15
FROM THE SHUI SHU (compiled 10th century)		
Hitomaro (c. 700)	*Arthur Waley*	15
Kiyowara Fukuyaba (c. 900-930)	*Arthur Waley*	16
FROM THE HYAKU-NIN-ISSHU (13th century)		
Princess Shoku	*Curtis Hidden Page*	16
Lady Horikawa	*Curtis Hidden Page*	16
Fujiwara No Michinobu	*Curtis Hidden Page*	16
Lady Sanuki	*Curtis Hidden Pape*	16
BASHO (1644-1694)		
Four Poems	*Curtis Hidden Page*	17

SANSKRIT

FROM THE RIGVEDA (c. 1500 B. C.)		
Pushan, God of Pasture	*Romesh Dutt*	18
FROM THE PANCHATANTRA (2nd century B. C. et seq.)		
True Friendship	*Arthur W. Ryder*	20
Fool and False	*Arthur W. Ryder*	20
KALIDASA (c. 500)		
Autumn *from* the Seasons	*Arthur W. Ryder*	21
BHARTRIHARI (c. 500)		
Time	*Paul Elmer More*	22

ARABIAN

FROM THE MU'ALLAQÁT (compiled 8th century)		
ANTARA (6th century)		
Abla	*E. Powys Mathers*	23
FROM THE MUFADDALIYAT (compiled 8th century)		
ALQAMAH (6th century)		
His Camel	*Sir Charles Lyall*	24
KHANSÁ (7th century)		
Tears	*R. A. Nicholson*	25
TA' ABBATA SHARRA (7th century)		
Ever Watchful	*W. G. Palgrave*	25
ABD-AR-RAHMAN I. (8th century)		
The Palm Tree	*J. B. Trend*	26
FROM THE HAMÂSAH (compiled 9th century)		
HITTÂN, SON OF AL-MU'ALLA OF TAYYI		
His Children	*Sir Charles Lyall*	27
IBN DARRÂJ AL-ANDALÛS (11th century)		
The Wing of Separation	*J. B. Trend*	27
MU'TAMID, KING OF SEVILLE		
The Fountain	*Dulcie L. Smith*	28
Woo Not the World	*Dulcie L. Smith*	29

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
FROM THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS (13th century?)		
Dates	*E. Powys Mathers*	29
Psalm of Battle	*E. Powys Mathers*	29
Death	*E. Powys Mathers*	30
Laments	*E. Powys Mathers*	30
The Wazir Dandan for Prince Sharkan	*E. Powys Mathers*	30
Tumadir Al-Khansa for Her Brother	*E. Powys Mathers*	30
FROM THE ARABIC		
The Days of Our Youth	*Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*	33
PERSIAN		
FIRDAWSI (935-1025)		
Alas for Youth	*R. A. Nicholson*	36
OMAR KHAYYÁM (d. 1123)		
The Rubáiyát	*Edward FitzGerald*	36
SA'DI (d. 1291)		
FROM THE GULISTAN		
Friendship	*L. Cranmer-Byng*	44
Mesnevi	*L. Cranmer-Byng*	44
Courage	*Sir Edwin Arnold*	45
Help	*Sir Edwin Arnold*	45
FROM THE BUSTAN		
The Dancer	*Sir Edwin Arnold*	45
HAFIZ (d. 1389)		
Odes		
6.	*Gertrude Lowthian Bell*	46
10.	*Gertrude Lowthian Bell*	47
11.	*John Hindley*	47
HEBREW		
FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (10-1st centuries B. C.)		
From the Book of Psalms	*King James Version*	48
From the Book of Job	*King James Version*	55
From Ecclesiastes	*King James Version*	61
JUDAH HA-LEVI (d. 1140)		
To Zion	*Maurice Samuel*	65
CHAIM NACHMAN BIALIK (1873-)		
From "Songs of the People"	*Maurice Samuel*	66
The Dead of the Wilderness	*Maurice Samuel*	68
YEHOASH (SOLOMON BLOOMGARDEN) (1870-1926)		
An Old Song (Yiddish)	*Marie Syrkin*	77
EGYPTIAN		
FROM THE BOOK OF THE DEAD (3500 B. C. et seq.)		
The Dead Man Ariseth and Singeth a Hymn to the Sun	*Robert Hillyer*	78

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
He Holdeth Fast to the Memory of His Identity	*Robert Hillyer*	79
He Approacheth the Hall of Judgment	*Robert Hillyer*	80
He Is Declared True of Word	*Robert Hillyer*	80
He Cometh Forth Into the Day	*Robert Hillyer*	81
He Maketh Himself One with the Only God, Whose Limbs are the Many Gods	*Robert Hillyer*	82
He Walketh by Day	*Robert Hillyer*	83
He Establishes His Triumph	*Robert Hillyer*	83
He Knoweth the Souls of the West	*Robert Hillyer*	83
He Is Like the Lotus	*Robert Hillyer*	84
He Singeth in the Underworld	*Robert Hillyer*	84
The Other World	*Robert Hillyer*	85
Adoration of the Disk by King Akhnaten and Princess Nefer Neferiu Aten	*Robert Hillyer*	86

GREEK

HOMERIC HYMNS (7th century B. C.?)		
Hymn to Earth the Mother of All	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	88
ALCMAN (c. 680 B. C.)		
Fragment	*Thomas Campbell*	89
ALCÆUS (610 B. C.)		
The Storm	*John Hermann Merivale*	89
SAPPHO (610 B. C.)		
Fragments		
Hesperus the Bringer	*Lord Byron*	89
One Girl	*D. G. Rossetti*	90
The Dust of Timas	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	90
Round About Me	*William Ellery Leonard*	91
Full Moon	*William Ellery Leonard*	91
Forever Dead	*William Ellery Leonard*	91
THEOGNIS (540 B. C.)		
Hope	*John Hookham Frere*	91
Poverty	*John Hookham Frere*	92
ANACREON AND ANACREONTICS (6th century B. C. et seq.)		
The Grasshopper	*Abraham Cowley*	92
Age	*Abraham Cowley*	93
Beauty	*Thomas Stanley*	94
The Picture	*Thomas Stanley*	94
Spring	*Thomas Stanley*	95
Youthful Age	*Thomas Stanley*	96
The Wish	*Thomas Stanley*	96
Anacreon's Dove	*Samuel Johnson*	96
SIMONIDES OF CEOS (480 B. C.)		
Thermopylæ	*William Lisle Bowles*	98

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
BACCHYLIDES (450 B. C.)		
Peace on Earth	*John Addington Symonds*	98
ÆSCHYLUS (525-456 B. C.)		
Chorus from Agamemnon	*Sir Gilbert Murray*	98
Chorus from The Seven Against Thebes	*A. E. Housman*	99
SOPHOCLES (495-406 B. C.)		
Chorus from Œdipus Coloneus	*A. E. Housman*	100
Chorus from Ajax	*Winthrop Mackworth Praed*	101
EURIPIDES (480-406 B. C.)		
Chorus from Alcestis	*A. E. Housman*	102
Choruses from the Cyclops	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	104
Chorus from Hippolytus—O' for the Wings of a Dove	*Sir Gilbert Murray*	105
ARISTOPHANES (444-380 B. C.)		
Chorus of Birds	*Algernon Charles Swinburne*	106
THEOCRITUS (3rd century B. C.)		
The Death of Daphnis	*Charles Stuart Calverley*	108
The Incantation	*Charles Stuart Calverley*	113
A Sylvan Revel	*Edward Cracroft Lefroy*	117
Cleonicos	*Edward Cracroft Lefroy*	118
The Monument of Cleita	*Edward Cracroft Lefroy*	118
The Grave of Hipponax	*Edward Cracroft Lefroy*	119
The Cyclops	*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*	119
BION (3rd century B. C.)		
Lament for Adonis	*John Addington Symonds*	122
MOSCHUS (3rd century B. C.)		
Lament for Bion	*George Chapman*	125
The Ocean	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	127
"ÆSOP'S FABLES" (3rd century.)		
The Shepherd-Boy and the Wolf	*William Ellery Leonard*	128
The Ass in the Lion's Skin	*William Ellery Leonard*	128
The Swan and the Goose	*William Ellery Leonard*	128
FROM THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY (490 B. C.-1000 A. D.)		
AGATHIAS		
Not Such Your Burden	*William M. Hardinge*	129
Plutarch	*John Dryden*	130
ANONYMOUS		
Spirit of Plato	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	130
Dion of Tarsus	*Alma Strettell*	130
The Tomb of Diogenes	*John Addington Symonds*	130
The Lion Over the Tomb of Leonidas	*Walter Leaf*	131
ASCLEPIADES		
Eumares	*Richard Garnett*	131
CALLIMACHUS		
Heraclitus	*William Cory*	131
Timon's Epitaph	*William Shakespeare*	131
His Son	*G. B. Grundy*	132
CARPHYLLIDES		
A Happy Man	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	132

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
GLAUCUS		
An Inscription by the Sea	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	132
LEONAIDS OF ALEXANDRIA		
Menodotis	*Richard Garnett*	133
LEONIDAS OF TARENTUM		
The Spinning Woman	*Andrew Lang*	133
The Tomb of Crethon	*John Hermann Merivale*	133
The Last Journey	*Charles Merivale*	134
LUCIANUS		
Artificial Beauty	*William Cowper*	134
MARCUS ARGENTARIUS		
The Old Story	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	134
MELEAGER		
In the Spring	*Andrew Lang*	135
Spring	*William M. Hardinge*	135
A Garland for Heliodora	*Christopher North*	136
NICARCHUS		
The Raven	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	137
NICIAS		
The Fountain at the Tomb	*Charles Merivale*	137
PALLADAS		
Vanity of Vanities	*William M. Hardinge*	137
PAULUS SILENTIARIUS		
No Matter	*William Cowper*	138
PLATO		
Morning and Evening Star	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	138
On a Seal	*Thomas Stanley*	138
Farewell	*Charles Whibley*	138
POSIDIPPUS		
Doricha	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	139
RUFINUS		
The Lover's Posy	*W. H. D. Rouse*	139

LATIN

TITUS LUCRETIUS CARUS (95-52 B. C.)		
No Single Thing Abides	*W. H. Mallock*	140
Against the Fear of Death	*John Dryden*	144
CAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS (87-57 B. C.)		
My Sweetest Lesbia	*Thomas Campion*	145
To Celia	*Ben Jonson*	146
Lesbia Railing	*Jonathan Swift*	146
True or False	*Walter Savage Landor*	147
Sappho	*William Ellery Leonard*	147
On the Burial of His Brother	*Aubrey Beardsley*	147
Sirmo	*Charles Stuart Calverley*	148
Love and Death	*H. W. Garrod*	148
The Yacht	*John Hookham Frere*	149
PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO (70-19 B. C.)		
The Messiah	*John Dryden*	150
QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS (65-8 B. C.)		
To Thaliarchus	*John Dryden*	152
To Mæcenas	*John Dryden*	153

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
The Immortality of Verse	*Alexander Pope*	156
To Fuscus Aristus	*Abraham Cowley*	157
To Licinius	*William Cowper*	159
Persian Fopperies	*William Cowper*	160
To Pyrrha	*John Milton*	161
To Sally	*John Quincy Adams*	161
The Ship of State	*William Ewart Gladstone*	162
Extremum Tanain	*Austin Dobson*	163
To Chloë	*Austin Dobson*	164
To the Fountain of Bandusia	*Eugene Field*	164
Ad Leuconoen	*F. P. Adams*	165
Ad Xanthiam Phoceum	*F. P. Adams*	165
Invocation	*Louis Untermeyer*	166
Holiday	*Louis Untermeyer*	167
SEXTUS AURELIUS PROPERTIUS (51-? B. C.)		
When Thou Must Home	*Thomas Campion*	168
Revenge to Come	*Kirby Flower Smith*	168
PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO (43 B. C.-18 A. D.)		
Winter at Tomi	*F. A. Wright*	169
FROM THE METAMORPHOSES		
Magic	*William Shakespeare*	170
Baucis and Philemon	*John Dryden*	170
PHAEDRUS (1st century)		
Æsop at Play	*Christopher Smart*	175
The Dog in the River	*Christopher Smart*	176
PETRONIUS ARBITER (1st century)		
Encouragement to Exile	*Howard Mumford Jones*	176
MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS (40-104)		
Non amo te	*Tom Brown*	177
Procrastination	*Abraham Cowley*	177
Inviting a Friend to Supper	*Ben Jonson*	177
Post-obits and the Poets	*Lord Byron*	179
Bought Locks	*Sir John Harington*	179
Temperament	*Joseph Addison*	179
A Hinted Wish	*Samuel Johnson*	179
What Makes a Happy Life	*Goldwin Smith*	179
On the Death of a Young and Favorite Slave	*Goldwin Smith*	180
Erotion	*Kirby Fowler Smith*	180
DECIMUS JUNIUS JUVENALIS (60-140)		
Celestial Wisdom	*Samuel Johnson*	181
THE EMPEROR HADRIAN (76-138)		
The Dying Christian to His Soul	*Alexander Pope*	182
DECIMUS MAGNUS AUSONIUS (310-395)		
To His Wife	*Terrot Reaveley Glover*	182
CLAUDIUS CLAUDIANUS (c. 400)		
The Old Man of Verona	*Abraham Cowley*	183
The Lonely Isle	*Howard Mumford Jones*	183
MEDIEVAL LATIN STUDENTS' SONGS (12th-13th centuries)		
A Song of the Open Road	*John Addington Symonds*	184
A Pastoral	*John Addington Symonds*	185

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
LATIN HYMNS		
Veni Creator Spiritus	*John Dryden*	186
The Te Deum	*John Dryden*	187

ITALIAN

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1182-1226)		
Cantica: Our Lord Christ	*D. G. Rossetti*	189
GUIDO GUINICELLI (13th century)		
Sonnet: Of Moderation and Tolerance	*D. G. Rossetti*	189
Canzone: He Perceives His Rashness in Love	*D. G. Rossetti*	190
JACOPÓ DA LENTINO (13th century)		
Sonnet: Of His Lady in Heaven	*D. G. Rossetti*	191
GIACOMINO PUGLIESI (13th century)		
Canzone: Of His Dead Lady	*D. G. Rossetti*	192
FOLGORE DA SAN GEMINIANO (13th century)		
Sonnet: Of Virtue	*D. G. Rossetti*	194
On Knighthood	*John Addington Symonds*	194
PIER MORONELLI DI FIORENZA (13th century)		
Canzonetta: A Bitter Song to His Lady	*D. G. Rossetti*	195
RUSTICO DI FILIPPO (1200?-1270)		
Sonnet: Of the Making of Master Messerin	*D. G. Rossetti*	197
GUIDO CAVALCANTI (1250-1301)		
Sonnet: To His Lady Joan, of Florence	*D. G. Rossetti*	198
To Dante	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	198
Sonnet: Of An Ill-favored Lady	*D. G. Rossetti*	199
Ballata: In Exile at Sarzana	*D. G. Rossetti*	199
FRANCESCO DA BARBERINO (1264-1348)		
Of Caution	*D. G. Rossetti*	201
DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265-1321)		
FROM LA VITA NUOVA		
All ye that pass along Love's trodden way	*D. G. Rossetti*	201
Death, always cruel, Pity's foe in chief	*D. G. Rossetti*	202
The thoughts are broken in my memory	*D. G. Rossetti*	202
At whiles (yea oftentimes) I muse over	*D. G. Rossetti*	203
My lady carries love within her eyes	*D. G. Rossetti*	203
A very pitiful lady, very young	*D. G. Rossetti*	204
I felt a spirit of love begin to stir	*D. G. Rossetti*	206

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
My lady looks so gentle and so pure	*D. G. Rossetti*	206
Whatever while the thought comes over me	*D. G. Rossetti*	207
Love's pallor and the semblance of deep ruth	*D. G. Rossetti*	207
A gentle thought there is will often start	*D. G. Rossetti*	208
Ye pilgrim-folk, advancing pensively	*D. G. Rossetti*	208
Beyond the sphere which spreads to widest space	*D. G. Rossetti*	209
Sonnet: To Guido Cavalcanti	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	209
Sonnet: Of Beatrice de' Portinari	*D. G. Rossetti*	210
Ballata: He Will Gaze Upon Beatrice	*D. G. Rossetti*	210
Sonnet: Of Beauty and Duty	*D. G. Rossetti*	211
Sestina: Of the Lady Pietra degli Scrovigni	*D. G. Rossetti*	211
CINO DA PISTORA (1270-1336)		
Madrigal	*D. G. Rossetti*	212
Sonnet: Of the Grave of Selvaggia	*D. G. Rossetti*	213
Canzone: His Lament for Selvaggia	*D. G. Rossetti*	213
CECCO ANGIOLIERI, DA SIENA (c. 1300)		
Sonnet: Of Becchina in a Rage	*D. G. Rossetti*	214
Sonnet: In absence from Becchina	*D. G. Rossetti*	214
Sonnet: He Rails Against Dante	*D. G. Rossetti*	215
Sonnet: Of All He Would Do	*D. G. Rossetti*	215
FRANCESCO PETRARCA (1304-1374)		
Visions	*Edmund Spenser*	216
Summer Is Come	*The Earl of Surrey*	218
Love's Fidelity	*The Earl of Surrey*	219
Love's Inconsistency	*Sir Thomas Wyatt*	219
Signs of Love	*C. B. Cayley*	220
If It Be Destined	*Edward FitzGerald*	220
GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO (1313-1375)		
Sonnets	*D. G. Rossetti*	221
FAZIO DEGLI UBERTI (1326-1360)		
Of England, and of Its Marvels	*D. G. Rossetti*	222
FRANCO SACCHETTI (1335-1400?)		
Catch	*D. G. Rossetti*	224
LORENZO DE' MEDICI (1448-1492)		
A Lyric	*John Addington Symonds*	226
NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527)		
Opportunity	*James Elroy Flecker*	227
MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475-1564)		
The Doom of Beauty	*John Addington Symonds*	228

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
Celestial Love	*John Addington Symonds*	228
On the Brink of Death	*John Addington Symonds*	229
Joy May Kill	*John Addington Symonds*	229
Love's Justification	*William Wordsworth*	229
To the Supreme Being	*William Wordsworth*	230
To Vittoria Colonna	*H. W. Longfellow*	230
Dante	*H. W. Longfellow*	231
Poem	*George Santayana*	231
GIOVANNI DELLA CASA (1503-1556)		
To Sleep	John Addington Symonds	232
GIOVANNI BATTISTA GUARINI (1537-1612)		
Spring	*Leigh Hunt*	232
TORQUATO TASSO (1544-1595)		
To His Mistress in Absence	*Thomas Stanley*	233
GIORDANO BRUNO (1548-1600)		
The Philosophic Flight	*John Addington Symonds*	233
GABRIELLO CHIABRERA (1562-1637)		
Epitaphs	*William Wordsworth*	234
TOMASSO CAMPANELLA (1568-1639)		
The People	*John Addington Symonds*	237
VITTORIO ALFIERI (1749-1803)		
To Dante	*Lorna De' Lucchi*	237
JACOPO VITTORELLI (1749-1803)		
On a Nun	*Lord Byron*	238
GIACOMO LEOPARDI (1798-1837)		
A sè stesso	*Lorna De' Lucchi*	238
L'Infinito	*Lorna De' Lucchi*	239
GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI (1836-1907)		
Snowfall	*Romilda Rendel*	239
Primo Vere	*John Bailey*	240
POPULAR SONGS OF TUSCANY	*John Addington Symonds*	241

SPANISH

JUAN II OF CASTILE (1405-1454)		
Cancion	*George Ticknor*	243
DIEGO DE SALDAÑA (15th century)		
Eyes So Tristful	*H. W. Longfellow*	243
ANONYMOUS (15th century)		
Villancico	*Thomas Walsh*	244
CRISTOBAL DE CASTILLEJO (1490-1550)		
Some Day, Some Day	*H. W. Longfellow*	244
ANONYMOUS (16th century)		
The Siesta	*William Cullen Bryant*	245
OLD SPANISH BALLADS (16th century?)		
Gentle River, Gentle River	*Thomas Percy*	246
The Lamentation for Celin	*John Gibson Lockhart*	248
GIL VICENTE (16th century)		
Song	*H. W. Longfellow*	250
SISTER MARCELA DE CARPIO DE SAN FELIX (16th century)		
Amor Mysticus	*John Hay*	250

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
SAINT TERESA (1515-1582)		
If, Lord, Thy Love For Me is Strong	*Arthur Symons*	251
Let Mine Eyes See Thee	*Arthur Symons*	252
LUIS VAZ DE CAMOËNS (1524-1580)		
On the Death of Cantarina de Attayda	*R. F. Burton*	253
Sonnet: Leave Me	*Richard Garnett*	253
LUIS DE GÓNGORA (1561-1627)		
Let Me Go Warm	*H. W. Longfellow*	254
LOPE DE VEGA (1562-1635)		
A Song of the Virgin Mother	*Ezra Pound*	255
FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO Y VILLEGAS (1580-1645)		
Sonnet: Death Warnings	*John Masefield*	256
PEDRO CALDERON DE LA BARCA (1600-1681)		
The Dream Called Life	*Edward FitzGerald*	257
From Life Is a Dream	*Arthur Symons*	258
GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER (1836-1870)		
They Closed Her Eyes	*John Masefield*	259
ANTONIO MACHADO (1879-)		
Poems	*John Dos Passos*	262
SPANISH FOLK SONGS	*Havelock Ellis*	263

FRENCH

FROM THE PROVENÇAL		
MARCABRUN (12th century)		
At the Fountain	*Harriet Waters Preston*	264
ARNAUT DANIEL		
Bel M'es Quan Lo Vens M'alena	*Harriet Waters Preston*	265
PEIRE VIDAL (12th century)		
Song of Breath	*Ezra Pound*	266
MARIE DE FRANCE (13th century)		
Song from Chartivel	*Arthur O'Shaughnessy*	267
Would I Might Go Far Over Sea	*Arthur O'Shaughnessy*	268
CHARLES D'ORLEANS (1391-1465)		
Spring	*Andrew Lang*	269
ANONYMOUS		
John of Tours	*D. G. Rossetti*	270
Ballade de Marguerite	*Oscar Wilde*	271
Medieval Norman Songs	*John Addington Symonds*	273
BALLADS		
Le Père Sévère	*Andrew Lang*	276
Lost for a Rose's Sake	*Andrew Lang*	277
FRANÇOIS VILLON (1431-1489)		
Ballad of the Gibbet	*Andrew Lang*	278
Rondel	*Andrew Lang*	279
No, I am not as others are	*Arthur Symons*	280
The Ballad of Dead Ladies	*D. G. Rossetti*	281

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
Ballad of the Lords of Old Time	*Algernon Charles Swinburne*	282
Ballad for the Women of Paris	*Algernon Charles Swinburne*	282
CLEMENT MAROT (1495-1544)		
The Posy Ring	*Ford Maddox Ford*	283
A Love-lesson	*Leigh Hunt*	284
Madame d'Albert's Laugh	*Leigh Hunt*	284
PIERRE DE ROSNARD (1524-1585)		
Fragment of a Sonnet	*John Keats*	284
Roses	*Andrew Lang*	285
The Rose	*Andrew Lang*	285
Of His Lady's Old Age	*Andrew Lang*	286
His Lady's Death	*Andrew Lang*	286
The Paradox of Time	*Austin Dobson*	287
JOACHIM DU BELLAY (1525-1560)		
To His Friend in Elysium	*Andrew Lang*	288
A Sonnet to Heavenly Beauty	*Andrew Lang*	288
Rome	*Ezra Pound*	289
JEAN DE LA FONTAINE (1621-1695)		
The Cock and the Fox	*Elizur Wright*	289
The Crow and the Fox	*Edward Marsh*	291
JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIÈRE (1622-1673)		
To Monsieur de la Mothe le Vayer	*Austin Dobson*	291
ANDRÉ CHÉNIER (1760-1794)		
Elegies	*Arthur Symons*	292
PIERRE JEAN DE BERANGER (1780-1857)		
The King of Yvetot	*William Toynbee*	292
ALPHONSE MARIE LOUIS DE LAMARTINE (1792-1869)		
The Cedars of Lebanon	*Toru Dutt*	294
ALFRED DE VIGNY (1797-1863)		
The Sound of the Horn	*Wilfrid Thorley*	295
Nature	*Margaret Jourdain*	297
VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885)		
A Sunset	*Francis Thompson*	297
The Grave and the Rose	*Andrew Lang*	299
The Genesis of Butterflies	*Andrew Lang*	300
More Strong than Time	*Andrew Lang*	300
The Poor Children	*Algernon Charles Swinburne*	301
GÉRARD DE NERVAL (1808-1855)		
An Old Tune	*Andrew Lang*	302
ALFRED DE MUSSET (1810-1857)		
Juana	*Andrew Lang*	302
THÉOPHILE GAUTIER (1811-1872)		
Art	*George Santayana*	304
Clarimonde	*Lafcadio Hearn*	305
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE (1821-1867)		
Les Hiboux	*Arthur Symons*	307
Sois Sage O ma Douleur	*Lord Alfred Douglas*	307
La Beauté	*Lord Alfred Douglas*	308
Harmonie du Soir	*Lord Alfred Douglas*	308

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL (1830-1914)		
The Cocooning	*Harriet Waters Preston*	309
The Leaf-Picking	*Harriet Waters Preston*	310
CATULLE MENDÉS (1841-1909)		
I Go By Road	*Alice Meynell*	311
STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ (1842-1898)		
Sigh	*Arthur Symons*	312
Sea-wind	*Arthur Symons*	312
JOSE-MARIA DE HEREDIA (1842-1905)		
The Laborer	*Wilfrid Thorley*	313
PAUL VERLAINE (1844-1896)		
Il pleut Doucement sur la Ville	*Ernest Dowson*	313
Spleen	*Ernest Dowson*	314
The Sky Is Up Above the Roof	*Ernest Dowson*	314
A Clymene	*Arthur Symons*	315
Pantomime	*Arthur Symons*	316
Mandoline	*Arthur Symons*	316
Chansons d'Aùtomne	*Arthur Symons*	317
Femme et Chatte	*Arthur Symons*	317
From Sagesse	*Arthur Symons*	318
ARTHUR RIMBAUD (1854-1891)		
Sensation	*Jethro Bithell*	318
The Sleeper of the Valley	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	319
Song of the Highest Tower	*Edgell Rickword*	319
EMILE VERHAEREN (1855-1916)		
The Poor	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	320
ALBERT SAMAIN (1858-1900)		
Pannyra of the Golden Heel	*James Elroy Flecker*	320
From Summer Hours	*Jethro Bithell*	320
MAURICE MAETERLINCK (1862-)		
Song	*Jethro Bithell*	321
The Last Word	*Frederick York Powell*	321
HENRI DE REGNIER (1864-)		
Night	*Seumas O'Sullivan*	322
Je ne veux de personne auprès de ma tristesse	*Seumas O'Sullivan*	323
ANDRÉ SPIRE (1868-)		
Lonely	*Jethro Bithell*	323
FRANCIS JAMMES (1868-)		
Amsterdam	*Jethro Bithell*	324
Prayer to Go to Paradise with the Asses	*Jethro Bithell*	326
The Child Reads an Almanac	*Lugwig Lewisohn*	327
PAUL FORT (1872-)		
Ballade	*Frederick Yorke Powell*	328
PAUL VALÉRY (1872-)		
Helen, the Sad Queen	*Joseph T. Shipley*	328
CHARLES VILDRAC (1882-)		
After Midnight	*Jethro Bithell*	329
JULES ROMAINS (1885-)		
Another Spirit Advances	*Joseph T. Shipley*	329

CONTENTS

GERMAN

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
FROM THE MINNESINGERS		
SIR HEINRICH VON RUGGE (12th century)		
He That Loves a Rosy Cheek	*Jethro Bithell*	331
SIR REINMAR VON HAGENAU (12th century)		
A Childish Game	*Jethro Bithell*	331
SIR WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE (13th century)		
Awake!	*Jethro Bithell*	332
With a Rod No Man Alive	*Jethro Bithell*	332
SIR WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH (13th century)		
His Own True Wife	*Jethro Bithell*	334
SIR NEIDHART VON REUENTAL (13th century)		
On the Mountain	*Jethro Bithell*	334
SIR ULRICH VON LIECHTENSTEIN (13th century)		
Love, Whose Month Was Ever May	*Jethro Bithell*	335
ANONYMOUS (16th century)		
Westphalian Song	*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*	336
JOHANN GOTTFRIED VON HERDER (1744-1803)		
Sir Olaf	*Elizabeth Craigmyle*	336
Esthonian Bridal Song	*W. Taylor*	338
LUDWIG HEINRICH CHRISTOPH HÖLTY (1748-1776)		
Harvest Song	*Charles J. Brooks*	338
JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749-1832)		
The Erl-King	*Sir Walter Scott*	339
Wanderer's Night-Song	*H. W. Longfellow*	340
The Rose	*James Clarence Mangan*	341
The King of Thulé	*James Clarence Mangan*	342
A Voice from the Invisible World	*James Clarence Mangan*	342
Prometheus	*John S. Dwight*	343
To the Parted One	*Christopher Pearse Cranch*	345
To a Golden Heart, Worn Round His Neck	*Margaret Fuller Ossoli*	345
Mignon	*James Elroy Flecker*	345
The Shepherd's Lament	*Bayard Taylor*	346
FROM FAUST		
Prologue in Heaven	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	347
The Thought Eternal	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	348
FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER (1759-1805)		
Thekla's Song	*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*	348
The Maid of Orleans	*James Clarence Mangan*	349
JOHANN GAUDENZ VON SALIS (1762-1834)		
Song of the Silent Land	*H. W. Longfellow*	349
JUSTINUS KERNER (1786-1862)		
Home-sickness	*James Clarence Mangan*	350
Durand of Blonden	*James Clarence Mangan*	351
The Castle by the Sea	*H. W. Longfellow*	352
In a Lovely Garden Walking	*George MacDonald*	353
A Leaf	*John S. Dwight*	353
The Hostess' Daughter	*Margaret Münsterberg*	354

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
FRIEDRICH RUECKERT (1789-1866)		
The Ride Round the Parapet	*James Clarence Mangan*	355
HEINRICH HEINE (1799-1856)		
Ad Finem	*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*	361
Mein Kind, wir waren Kinder	*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*	361
The Sea Hath Its Pearls	*H. W. Longfellow*	362
Sag' mir wer einst die Uhren erfund	*Richard Garnett*	364
Warum sind denn die Rosen so blass	*Richard Garnett*	364
Es fällt ein Stern herunter	*Richard Garnett*	364
Die Rose, die Lilie	*Richard Garnett*	364
Mein Liebchen, wir sassen zusammen	*James Thomson*	365
Es stehen unbeweglich	*James Thomson*	365
Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam	*James Thomson*	366
Mir träumte wieder der alte Traum	*James Thomson*	366
Du bist wie eine Blume	*Kate Freiligrath Kroeker*	366
The Message	*Kate Freiligrath Kroeker*	367
To My Mother	*Matilda Dickson*	367
Mädchen mit dem rothen Mündchen	*Sir Theodore Martin*	368
Anno 1829	*Charles Stuart Calverley*	368
The Azra	*John Hay*	369
On Black and Blue	*John Todhunter*	369
Fresco-Sonnets to Christian Sethe	*John Todhunter*	370
A Maiden Lies in Her Chamber	*Louis Untermeyer*	371
Oh Lovely Fishermaiden	*Louis Untermeyer*	371
Twilight	*Louis Untermeyer*	372
The Coffin	*Louis Untermeyer*	373
The Storm	*Louis Untermeyer*	373
My Songs Are Poisoned	*Louis Untermeyer*	374
When Two Are Parted	*Louis Untermeyer*	374
FROM THE NORTH SEA		
Evening Twilight	*John Todhunter*	374
Epilog	*Louis Untermeyer*	375
EDUARD MÖRICKE (1804-1875)		
Beauty Rohtraut	*George Meredith*	376
DETLEV VON LILIENCRON (1844-1909)		
Autumn	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	377
GUSTAV FALKE (1853-1916)		
God's Harp	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	377
RICHARD DEHMEL (1863-1920)		
Before the Storm	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	378
Vigil	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	379
Harvest Song	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	379
The Silent Town	*Jethro Bithell*	380

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
The Laborer	*Jethro Bithell*	380
Voice in Darkness	*Margarete Münsterberg*	381
CÄSAR FLAISCHLEN (1864-1920)		
Most Quietly at Times	*Jethro Bithell*	382
OTTO JULIUS BIERBAUM (1865-1910)		
Kindly Vision	*Jethro Bithell*	382
Blacksmith Pain	*Jethro Bithell*	383
Oft in the Silent Night	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	383
STEFAN GEORGE (1868-)		
Stanzas Concerning Love	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	384
Rapture	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	385
The Lord of the Isle	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	386
ALFRED MOMBERT (1872-)		
Sleeping They Bear Me	*Jethro Bithell*	386
Idyl	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	387
CARL BUSSE (1872-)		
The Quiet Kingdom	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	387
HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL (1874-)		
The Two	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	388
A Venetian Night	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	388
Ballad of the Outer Life	*Jethro Bithell*	389
Many Indeed Must Perish in the Keel	*Jethro Bithell*	390
ARNO HOLZ (1863-)		
A Leave-taking	*Jethro Bithell*	391
Phantasus	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	392
KARL BULCKE (1875-)		
There Is an Old City	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	393
RAINER MARIA RILKE (1875-1926)		
For, Lord, the Crowded Cities Be	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	394
The Youth Dreams	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	394
Presaging	*Jessie Lemont*	395
HERMANN HESSE (1877-)		
Spring Song	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	395
Night	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	396

SCANDINAVIAN

OLD NORSE		
FROM THE ELDER EDDA (c. 1000)		
The First Lay of Gudrun	*William Morris and Eirikr Magnusson*	397
DANISH		
ANONYMOUS (14th-16th centuries)		
Ballads		
The Elected Knight	*H. W. Longfellow*	403
The Mer-man, and Marstig's Daughter	*Robert Jamieson*	405
JOHANNES EVALD (1743-1781)		
King Christian	*H. W. Longfellow*	406
JENS BAGGESEN (1764-1826)		
Childhood	*H. W. Longfellow*	407

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
NORWEGIAN		
HENRIK ARNOLD THAULOV WERGELAND (1808-1845)		
The Wall-Flower	*Sir Edmund Gosse*	409
HENRIK IBSEN (1828-1906)		
In the Orchard	*Sir Edmund Gosse*	409
BJÖRNSTERNE BJÖRNSON (1832-1910)		
The Boy and the Flute	*Sir Edmund Gosse*	411
SWEDISH		
GUSTAV ROSENHANE (1619-1684)		
Sonnets	*Sir Edmund Gosse*	411
OLOF WEXIONIUS (1656-1690?)		
On the Death of a Pious Lady	*Sir Edmund Gosse*	412
ESAIAS TEGNER (1782-1846)		
FROM FRITHIOFS SAGA		
Frithiof's Farewell	*H. W. Longfellow*	413

RUSSIAN

FOLK SONGS		
The Plaint of the Wife	*W. R. S. Ralston*	414
IVAN ANDREEVICH KRILOFF (1768-1844)		
The Peasant and the Sheep	*C. Fillingham Coxwell*	415
ALEXANDER SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN (1799-1837)		
Message to Siberia	*Max Eastman*	416
Work	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	417
The Prophet	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	417
MIKHAIL YURYEVICH LERMONTOV (1814-1841)		
Dagger	*Max Eastman*	418
A Sail	*Max Eastman*	419
The Mountain	*Max Eastman*	419
The Reed	*J. J. Robbins*	419
IVAN SAVVICH NIKITIN (1824-1861)		
A Night in a Village	*P. E. Matheson*	421
FYODOR SOLOGUB (1863-)		
The Amphora	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	422
VYACHESLAV IVANOV (1866-)		
The Holy Rose	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	422
IVAN BUNIN (1870-)		
Flax	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	423
VALERY BRYNSOV (1873-1924)		
Radiant Ranks of Seraphim	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	423
ALEXANDER BLOK (1880-1921)		
Russia	*Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky*	424

CONTENTS

ENGLISH

PAGE

ANONYMOUS (c. 1250)
Summer is icumen in 425
GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340?-1400)
Balade 425
ANONYMOUS (16th-17th centuries)
Sir Patrick Spens 426
The Wife of Usher's Well 427
Bonny Barbara Allan 429
Lord Randall 430
EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)
Amoretti 431
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)
A Ditty 432
From Astrophel and Stella 433
MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)
From Idea 434
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)
The Passionate Shepherd to His Love 434
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)
From the Sonnets 435
Songs from the Plays 444
BEN JONSON (1573-1637)
Hymn to Diana 449
Song to Celia 449
Simplex Munditiis 450
JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)
Song 450
Love's Deity 451
The Funeral 452
A Hymn to God the Father 453
RICHARD BARNEFIELD (1574-1627)
The Nightingale 453
JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625)
Aspatia's Song 454
GEORGE WITHER (1588-1667)
The Lover's Resolution 455
WILLIAM BROWNE (1590?-1645?)
On the Countess of Pembroke 456
ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)
An Ode for Ben Jonson 456
To Daffodils 457
Upon Julia's Clothes 458
Sweet Disorder 458
Grace for a Child 458
To the Virgins to Make Much of Time 458
GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)
Virtue 459
Peace 460
The Collar 461

CONTENTS

PAGE

THOMAS CAREW (1594?-1639)
Disdain Returned 462
Ask Me No More 463
JAMES SHIRLEY (1596-1666)
A Dirge 463
WILLIAM DAVENANT (1606-1668)
Song 464
EDMUND WALLER (1606-1687)
Go Lovely Rose 465
On a Girdle 465
JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)
Lycidas 466
On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three 471
To Mr. H. Lawes on His Airs 471
To Mr. Lawrence 472
On His Blindness 472
On the Late Massacre in Piedmont 473
SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)
Why So Pale and Wan? 473
The Constant Lover 474
RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)
To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars 474
To Althea, from Prison 475
ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)
The Garden 476
HENRY VAUGHAN (1622-1695)
The Retreat 479
JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)
To the Memory of Mr. Oldham 480
Song from Amphitryon 481
Song from Secret Love 481
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day 482
Characters from the Satires 484
Achitophel 484
Zimri 485
Og and Doeg 485
SIR CHARLES SEDLEY (1639?-1701)
To Celia 488
MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721)
A Better Answer 488
An Ode 489
JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)
Hymn 490
ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)
Ode on Solitude 491
Characters from the Satires 491
Atticus 491
Sporus 492
Wharton 493
Chloe 494
HENRY CAREY (1693?-1743)
Sally in Our Alley 494

CONTENTS

PAGE

William Shenstone (1714-1763)
Written at an Inn at Henley 496
Thomas Gray (1716-1771)
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard 497
William Collins (1721-1759)
Ode to Evening 501
Ode Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746 502
Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)
Song 503
William Blake (1757-1827)
The Piper 503
The Clod and the Pebble 504
The Sick Rose 504
The Tiger 504
Ah, Sunflower 504
The Garden of Love 506
A Poison Tree 506
From Milton 507
Robert Burns (1759-1796)
Highland Mary 507
Song: Mary Morison 508
Ye Flowery Banks 509
Of A' the Airts 510
A Red, Red Rose 510
Flow Gently, Sweet Afton 511
My Heart's in the Highlands 511
John Anderson My Jo 512
Song: Green Grow the Rashes 512
Tam Glen 513
Auld Lang Syne 514
Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut 515
William Wordsworth (1770-1850)
Influence of Natural Objects 516
She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways 517
I Traveled Among Unknown Men 518
A Slumber Did My Spirit Steal 518
The Solitary Reaper 519
London 1802 520
Composed upon Westminster Bridge Sept. 3, 1802 520
It Is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free 520
The World Is too Much with Us 521
Ode to Duty 521
Ode: Intimations of Immortality 523
Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)
Soldier, Rest! 529
Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)
Kubla Khan 530
Charles Lamb (1775-1834)
The Old Familiar Faces 532
Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864)
Rose Aylmer 533
Past Ruined Ilion 533

CONTENTS

PAGE

On His Seventy-fifth Birthday 533
Dirce 533

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785-1866)
The War-Song of Dinas Vawr 534

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)
She Walks in Beauty 534
So, We'll Go No More A-roving 536

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)
To —— 536
The Indian Serenade 536
To Night 537
Chorus from Hellas 538
Ozymandias 539
Ode to the West Wind 540

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)
Ode to a Nightingale 542
Ode on a Grecian Urn 545
To Autumn 546
When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be 547
La Belle Dame sans Merci 548

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801-1890)
The Pillar of the Cloud 549

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)
Mariana 550
Song from Maud 552
Break, break, break 554
Songs from The Princess 555

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)
Porphyria's Lover 556
My Last Duchess 558
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad 559
Home-Thoughts, from the Sea 560
Meeting at Night 560
Parting at Morning 561

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)
Where Lies the Land? 561
Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth 562

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)
Requiescat 562
Dover Beach 563

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)
Song 564
A Birthday 564
Remember 565

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)
The Garden of Proserpine 565
Chorus from Atalanta in Calydon 568

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)
Drummer Hodge 570
Hap 570
Let Me Enjoy 571
On an Invitation to the United States 571

CONTENTS

PAGE

ALICE MEYNELL (1850-1923)
The Shepherdess 572
ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN (1859-)
With Rue My Heart Is Laden 572
White in the Moon 573
Loveliest of Trees 573
Far in a Western Brookland 574
RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-)
Recessional 574
ERNEST DOWSON (1867-1900)
Vitae Summa Brevis Spem nos Vetat Incohare Longam ... 575
WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES (1870-)
Leisure 576
WALTER DE LA MARE (1873-)
The Listeners 576
JOHN MASEFIELD (1878-)
Sonnet 577
ALDOUS HUXLEY (1894-)
First Philosopher's Song 578
ROBERT GRAVES (1895-)
Lost Love 579

IRISH

FROM THE GAELIC — TRANSLATED BY
COLUM-CILLE (6th century)
Farewell to Ireland ..... *Douglas Hyde* 580
HUGH O'DONNELL (16th century)
Dark Rosaleen ..... *James Clarence Mangan* .. 581
O'GNIVE (16th century)
The Downfall of the Gael.. *Sir Samuel Ferguson* 583
EGAN O'RAHILLY (18th century)
Lament for Banba ..... *James Clarence Mangan* .. 586
RAFERTY (d. 1835)
I Am Raferty ..... *Douglas Hyde* 587
ANONYMOUS
A Poem to Be Said on Hearing the Birds Sing..... *Douglas Hyde* 588
THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852)
How Oft Has the Banshee Cried 588
ANONYMOUS
The Wearin' o' the Green 589
KATHERINE TYNAN (1861-)
The Doves 590
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-)
To an Isle in the Water 591
When You Are Old 591
The Everlasting Voices 592
The Cold Heaven 592
To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing 593

CONTENTS

PAGE

George William Russell (A. E.) (1867-)
A Mountain Wind 593
A Holy Hill 593
The Lonely 594
Immortality 594
John Millington Synge (1871-1909)
Prelude 595
In Kerry 595
Moira O'Neill
Corrymeela 596
Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916)
John-John 597
Seumas O'Sullivan (1878-)
The Starling Lake 598
Padraic Pearse (1880-1916)
Ideal (translated from the Gaelic by Thomas MacDonagh) 599
Padraic Colum (1881-)
River-Mates 600
A Drover 600
Joseph Campbell (1881-)
The Blind Man at the Fair 601
The Old Woman 602
James Stephens (1882-)
Deirdre 603
The Daisies 604
The Goat Paths 604
James Joyce (1882-)
I Hear an Army 605
Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916)
The Spark 606
Francis Ledwidge (1891-1917)
Lament for the Poets: 1916 607
Ardan Mór 608

AMERICAN

TRANSLATED BY

From the American Indian
Love Song (Papago) ..... *Mary Austin* 609
Neither Spirit nor Bird (Shoshone) ..... *Mary Austin* 609
Come Not Near My Songs (Shoshone) ..... *Mary Austin* 610
Lament of a Man for His Son (Paiute) ..... *Mary Austin* 610
The Grass on the Mountain (Paiute) ..... *Mary Austin* 611
Hunting Song (Navaho) .... *Natalie Curtis* 612
Song of the Horse (Navaho). *Natalie Curtis* 613
Song of the Rain Chant (Navaho) ..... *Natalie Curtis* 613
Korosta Katzina Song (Hopi) *Natalie Curtis* 614

CONTENTS

	TRANSLATED BY	PAGE
Corn-grinding Song (Laguna)	*Natalie Curtis*	615
The Voice that Beautifies the Land (Navaho)	*Washington Matthews*	615
Song to the Mountains (Pawnee)	*Alice C. Fletcher*	616
A Lover's Lament (Tewa)	*H. J. Spinden*	616
The Coyote and the Locust (Zuñi)	*Frank Cushing*	617
Ojibwa War Songs	*H. H. Schoolcraft*	617
Three Songs from the Haida	*Constance Lindsay Skinner*	618
RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)		
The Rhodora		619
Brahma		619
Concord Hymn		620
The Problem		621
Give All to Love		623
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)		
My Lost Youth		624
Chaucer		627
EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)		
To Helen		627
Ulalume		628
Annabel Lee		630
HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862)		
Smoke		631
Mist		632
WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)		
I saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing		632
A Noiseless, Patient Spider		633
Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking		633
When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed		640
EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)		
Success		649
A wounded deer leaps highest		650
Exclusion		650
Suspense		651
GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863-)		
I would I might forget that I am I		651
As in the midst of battle there is room		651
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-)		
Luke Havergal		652
Miniver Cheevy		653
Mr. Flood's Party		654
The Sheaves		655
AMY LOWELL (1874-1925)		
Patterns		656
ROBERT FROST (1875-)		
The Runaway		659
An Old Man's Winter Night		660
The Oven Bird		661
The Tuft of Flowers		661

CONTENTS

PAGE

Carl Sandburg (1878-)
Grass 663
Three Spring Notations on Bipeds 663
Nicholas Vachel Lindsay (1879-)
The Eagle that Is Forgotten 664
Ezra Pound (1885-)
The Garden 665
"H. D." (1886-)
Adonis 666
Oread 667
Robinson Jeffers (1887-)
Night 667
Continent's End 670
Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-)
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock 671
Morning at the Window 671
Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-)
Sonnet 671

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CHINESE

From the Shi King, or Book of Odes

Compiled c. 500 B.C.

The Shi King was compiled by Confucius from earlier collections which had been long existent. It was through the Odes that Confucius taught his own generation to understand the manners and customs and simple feelings of the men of old. These are the natural songs that float upward from the happy valleys and down the sedge-strewn banks of the wandering K'e. They are naïve and bright as on their birthday, with that most precious quality of truth and unconscious art which never lets them tarnish or fade.—L. Cranmer-Byng.

THE MORNING GLORY

The morning glory climbs above my head,
Pale flowers of white and purple, blue and red.
I am disquieted.

Down in the withered grasses something stirred;
I thought it was his footfall that I heard.
Then a grasshopper chirred.

I climbed the hill just as the new moon showed,
I saw him coming on the southern road.
My heart lays down its load.

(*Helen Waddell*)

HOW GOES THE NIGHT?

How goes the night?
Midnight has still to come.
Down in the court the torch is blazing bright;
I hear far off the throbbing of the drum.

How goes the night?
The night is not yet gone.

I hear the trumpets blowing on the height;
The torch is paling in the coming dawn.

How goes the night?
The night is past and done.
The torch is smoking in the morning light,
The dragon banner floating in the sun.

(*Helen Waddell*)

I WAIT MY LORD

The gourd has still its bitter leaves,
And deep the crossing at the ford.
I wait my lord.

The ford is brimming to its banks;
The pheasant cries upon her mate.
My lord is late.

The boatman still keeps beckoning,
And others reach their journey's end.
I wait my friend.

(*Helen Waddell*)

THE PEAR-TREE

This shade-bestowing pear-tree, thou
Hurt not, nor lay its leafage low;
Beneath it slept the Duke of Shaou.

This shade-bestowing pear-tree, thou
Hurt not, nor break one leafy bough;
Beneath it stayed the Duke of Shaou.

This shade-bestowing pear-tree, thou
Hurt not, nor bend one leafy bough,
Beneath it paused the Duke of Shaou.

(*Allen Upward*)

YOU WILL DIE

You have coats and robes,
But you do not trail them;
You have chariots and horses,
But you do not ride them.
By and by you will die,
And another will enjoy them.

You have courtyards and halls,
But they are not sprinkled and swept;
You have bells and drums,
But they are not struck.
By and by you will die,
And another will possess them.

You have wine and food;
Why not play daily on your lute,
That you may enjoy yourself now
And lengthen your days?
By and by you will die,
And another will take your place.

(*H. A. Giles*)

Anonymous

c. 124 B.C.

FIGHTING SOUTH OF THE CASTLE

They fought south of the Castle,
They died north of the wall.
They died in the moors and were not buried.
Their flesh was the food of crows.
"Tell the crows we are not afraid;
We have died in the moors and cannot be buried.
Crows, how can our bodies escape you?"
The waters flowed deep
And the rushes in the pool were dark.
The riders fought and were slain:

Their horses wander neighing.
By the bridge there was a house.
Was it south, was it north?
The harvest was never gathered.
How can we give you your offerings?
You served your Prince faithfully,
Though all in vain.
I think of you, faithful soldiers;
Your service shall not be forgotten.
For in the morning you went out to battle
And at night you did not return.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Tso Ssū

3rd century

THE SCHOLAR IN THE NARROW STREET

Flap, flap, the captive bird in the cage
Beating its wings against the four corners.
Depressed, depressed the scholar in the narrow street:
Clasping a shadow, he dwells in an empty house.
When he goes out, there is nowhere for him to go:
Bunches and brambles block up his path.
He composes a memorial, but it is rejected and unread;
He is left stranded, like a fish in a dry pond.
Without—he has not a single farthing of salary:
Within—there is not a peck of grain in his larder.
His relations upbraid him for his lack of success:
His friends and callers daily decrease in number.
Su Ch'in used to go preaching in the North
And Li Ssu sent a memorandum to the West.
I once hoped to pluck the fruits of life:
But now alas, they are all withered and dry.
Though one drinks at a river, one cannot drink more than a bellyful;
Enough is good, but there is no use in satiety.
The bird in a forest can perch but on one bough,
And this should be the wise man's pattern.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Chan Fang-sheng

4th century

SAILING HOMEWARD

Cliffs that rise a thousand feet
Without a break,
Lake that stretches a hundred miles
Without a wave.
Sands that are white through all the year,
Without a stain,
Pine-tree woods, winter and summer
Ever-green,
Streams that for ever flow and flow
Without a pause,
Trees that for twenty thousand years
Your vows have kept,
You have suddenly healed the pain of a traveler's heart,
And moved his brush to write a new song.

(*Arthur Waley*)

T'ao Ch'ien

365–427

SHADY, SHADY

Shady, shady the wood in front of the Hall:
At midsummer full of calm shadows.
The south wind follows summer's train:
With its eddying puffs it blows open my coat.
I am free from ties and can live a life of retirement.
When I rise from sleep, I play with books and harp.
The lettuce in the garden still grows moist:
Of last year's grain there is always plenty left.
Self-support should maintain strict limits:
More than enough is not what I want.
I grind millet and make good wine:
When the wine is heated, I pour it out for myself.
My little children are playing at my side,
Learning to talk, they babble unformed sounds.

These things have made me happy again
And I forget my lost cap of office.
Distant, distant I gaze at the white clouds:
With a deep yearning I think of the Sages of Antiquity.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Emperor Ch'ien Wēn-ti

6th century

LO-YANG

A BEAUTIFUL place is the town of Lo-yang:
The big streets are full of spring light.
The lads go driving out with harps in their hands:
The mulberry girls go out to the fields with their baskets.
Golden whips glint at the horses' flanks,
Gauze sleeves brush at the green boughs.
Racing dawn, the carriages come home,—
And the girls with their high baskets full of fruit.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Li T'ai-po

701–762

It is permitted to very few to live in the hearts of their countrymen as Li T'ai-po has lived in the hearts of the Chinese. There is no doubt at all that in Li T'ai-po we have one of the world's greatest lyrists.—FLORENCE AYSCOUGH.

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER

WHILE my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.

Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.
At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the lookout?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling
eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
Over the grass in the West garden;
They hurt me. I grow older.
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river
Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

(*Ezra Pound*)

CLEARING AT DAWN

The fields are chill; the sparse rain has stopped;
The colors of Spring teem on every side.
With leaping fish the blue pond is full;
With singing thrushes the green boughs droop.
The flowers of the field have dabbled their powdered
cheeks;
The mountain grasses are bent level at the waist.
By the bamboo stream the last fragment of cloud
Blown by the wind slowly scatters away.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Tu Fu

712–770

English writers on Chinese literature are fond of announcing that Li T'ai-po is China's greatest poet; the Chinese themselves, however, award this place to Tu Fu. We may put it that Li T'ai-po was the people's poet, and Tu Fu the poet of scholars.—ARTHUR WALEY.

THE EXCURSION

I

How delightful, at sunset, to loosen the boat!
A light wind is slow to raise waves.
Deep in the bamboo grove, the guests linger;
The lotus-flowers are pure and bright in the cool evening air.
The young nobles stir the ice-water;
The Beautiful Ones wash the lotus-roots, whose fibers are like silk threads.
A layer of clouds above our heads is black.
It will certainly rain, which impels me to write this poem.

II

The rain comes, soaking the mats upon which we are sitting.
A hurrying wind strikes the bow of the boat.
The rose-red rouge of the ladies from Yueh is wet;
The Yen beauties are anxious about their kingfisher-eyebrows.
We throw out a rope and draw in to the sloping bank. We tie the boat to the willow-trees.
We roll up the curtains and watch the floating wave-flowers.
Our return is different from out setting out. The wind whistles and blows in great gusts.
By the time we reach the shore, it seems as though the Fifth Month were Autumn.

(*Amy Lowell and Florence Ayscough*)

Po Chü-i

772–846

There is a story that he was in the habit of reading his poems to an old peasant woman and altering any expression which she could not understand. The poems of his contemporaries were mere elegant diversions which enabled the scholar to display his erudition, or the literary juggler his dexterity. No poet in the world can ever have enjoyed greater contemporary popularity than Po.—ARTHUR WALEY.

LODGING WITH THE OLD MAN OF THE STREAM

MEN's hearts love gold and jade;
Men's mouths covet wine and flesh.
Not so the old man of the stream;
He drinks from his gourd and asks nothing more.
South of the stream he cuts firewood and grass;
North of the stream he has built wall and roof.
Yearly he sows a single acre of land;
In spring he drives two yellow calves.
In these things he finds great repose;
Beyond these he has no wish or care.
By chance I met him walking by the water-side;
He took me home and lodged me in his thatched hut.
When I parted from him, to seek market and Court,
This old man asked my rank and pay.
Doubting my tale, he laughed loud and long:
"Privy Councillors do not sleep in barns."

(*Arthur Waley*)

REMEMBERING GOLDEN BELLS

RUINED and ill,—a man of two score;
  Pretty and guileless,—a girl of three.
Not a boy,—but still better than nothing:
To soothe one's feeling,—from time to time a kiss!
There came a day,—they suddenly took her from me;
Her soul's shadow wandered I know not where.

And when I remembered how just at the time she died
She lisped strange sounds, beginning to learn to talk,
Then I know that the ties of flesh and blood
Only bind us to a load of grief and sorrow.
At last, by thinking of the time before she was born,
By thought and reason I drove the pain away.
Since my heart forgot her, many days have passed
And three times winter has changed to spring.
This morning, for a little, the old grief came back,
Because, in the road, I met her foster-nurse.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Yüan Chēn

779–831

THE PITCHER

I DREAMT I climbed to a high, high plain;
And on the plain I found a deep well.
My throat was dry with climbing and I longed to drink,
And my eyes were eager to look into the cool shaft.
I walked round it; I looked right down;
I saw my image mirrored on the face of the pool.
An earthen pitcher was sinking into the black depths;
There was no rope to pull it to the well-head.
I was strangely troubled lest the pitcher should be lost,
And started wildly running to look for help.
From village to village I scoured that high plain;
The men were gone: the dogs leapt at my throat.
I came back and walked weeping round the well;
Faster and faster the blinding tears flowed—
Till my own sobbing suddenly woke me up;
My room was silent, no one in the house stirred;
The flame of my candle flickered with a green smoke;
The tears I had shed glittered in the candle-light.
A bell sounded; I knew it was the midnight-chime;
I sat up in bed and tried to arrange my thoughts:
The plain in my dream was the graveyard at Ch'ang-an,
Those hundred acres of untilled land.

The soil heavy and the mounds heaped high;
And the dead below them laid in deep troughs.
Deep are the troughs, yet sometimes dead men
Find their way to the world above the grave.
And to-night my love who died long ago
Came into my dream as the pitcher sunk in the well.
That was why the tears suddenly streamed from my eyes,
Streamed from my eyes and fell on the collar of my dress.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Su Tung-p'o

1036–1101

ON THE BIRTH OF HIS SON

Families, when a child is born
Want it to be intelligent.
I, through intelligence,
Having wrecked my whole life,
Only hope the baby will prove
Ignorant and stupid.
Then he will crown a tranquil life
By becoming a Cabinet Minister.

(*Arthur Waley*)

Lui Chi

1311–1375

A POET THINKS

The rain is due to fall,
The wind blows softly.

The branches of the cinnamon are moving,
The begonias stir on the green mounds.

Bright are the flying leaves,
The falling flowers are many.

The wind lifted the dry dust,
And he is lifting the wet dust;
Here and there the wind moves everything.

He passes under light gauze
And touches me.

I am alone with the beating of my heart.

There are leagues of sky,
And the water is flowing very fast.

Why do the birds let their feathers
Fall among the clouds?

I would have them carry my letters,
But the sky is long.

The stream flows east
And not one wave comes back with news.

The scented magnolias are shining still,
But always a few are falling.

I close his box on my guitar of jasper
And lay aside my jade flute.

I am alone with the beating of my heart.

Stay with me to-night,
Old songs.

(*E. Powys Mathers*)

JAPANESE

From the Manyo Shū

Compiled 8th century

Japanese poetry, as an art, may be said to begin with the Manyo Shu ("Ten-thousand-Leaves Collection"). The chief poets of the Manyo were Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Yamabe no Akahito.—ARTHUR WALEY.

PRINCESS DAIHAKU

7th century

How will you manage
To cross alone
The autumn mountain
Which was so hard to get across
Even when we went the two of us together?

PRINCE YUHARA

7th century

WHAT am I to do with my Sister?
Whom, like the Judas-tree
Which grows in the moon,
I may see with my eyes
But not touch with my hands?

OKURA

660–733

BECAUSE he is young
And will not know the way to go
Would I could bribe
The messenger of the Underworld
That on his shoulders he might carry him!

THE PRIEST HAKUTSU

c. 704

O PINE-TREE standing
At the side of the stone house,
When I look at you,
It is like seeing face to face
The men of old time.

YAKAMOCHI

d. 785

1

WHEN evening comes
I will leave the door open before hand and then
wait
For him who said he would come
To meet me in my dreams.

2

By way of pretext
I said "I will go
And look at
The condition of the bamboo fence;"
But it was really to see you!

THE LADY OF SAKANOYE

8th century

1

THE dress that my Brother has put on is thin.
O wind from Sao,
Do not blow hard
Till he reaches home.

2

My heart, thinking
"How beautiful he is"
Is like a swift river
Which though one dams it and dams it,
Will still break through.

3

Unknown love
Is as bitter a thing
As the maiden-lily
Which grows in the thickets
Of the summer moor.

From the Kokin Shū

Compiled 9th century

ONO NO KOMACHI

834–880

A THING which fades
With no outward sign—
Is the flower
Of the heart of man
In this world!

FUJIWARA NO TOSHIYUKI

d. 907

ALTHOUGH it is not plainly visible to the
eye
That autumn has come,
I am alarmed
By the noise of the wind!

From the Shui Shū

Compiled 10th century

HITOMARO

c. 700

WHEN,
Halting in front of it, I look
At the reflection which is in the depths
Of my clear mirror,
It gives me the impression of meeting
An unknown old gentleman.

KIYOWARA FUKUYABU

c. 900–930

Because river-fog
Hiding the mountain-base
Has risen,
The autumn mountain looks as though it
hung in the sky.

From the Hyaku-Nin-Isshu

13th century

PRINCESS SHOKU

I would that even now
My thread of life were broken—
So should my secret vow
Remain unspoken.

LADY HORIKAWA

How can one e'er be sure
If true love will endure?
My thoughts this morning are
As tangled as my hair.

FUJIWARA NO MICHINOBU

The day will soon be gone,
And night come back, I know . . .
Yet how I hate the dawn
That bids me go.

LADY SANUKI

Like a great rock, far out at sea,
Submerged at even the lowest tide,
Unseen, unknown of man—my sleeve
Is never for a moment dried.

(*Curtis Hidden Page*)

Bashō

1644–1694

Quick-falling dew,
Ah, let me cleanse in you
This wretched life.

A lonely pond in age-old stillness sleeps . .
Apart, unstirred by sound or motion . . . till
Suddenly into it a lithe frog leaps.

Old men, white-haired, beside the ancestral graves,
All of the household now
Stand lonesome, leaning on their staves.

O cricket, from your cheery cry
No one could ever guess
How quickly you must die.

(*Curtis Hidden Page*)

SANSKRIT

From the Rigveda

c. 1500 B.C.

The Rigveda consists of 1,028 hymns, comprising over ten thousand verses. The hymns are generally simple, and betray a childlike and simple faith in the gods, to whom sacrifices are offered and libations of the Soma juice are poured, and who are asked for increase of progeny, cattle, and wealth, and implored to help the Aryans in their still doubtful struggle against the black aborigines of the Punjab.—Romesh Dutt.

PUSHAN, GOD OF PASTURE

Pushan, God of golden day,
Shorten thou the shepherd's way,
Vanquish every foe and stranger,
Free our path from every danger;
Cloud-born Pushan, ever more,
Lead us as you led before!

Smite the wild wolf, fierce and vile,
Lurking in the dark defile,
Smite the robber and the thief,
Stealing forth to take our life;
Cloud-born Pushan, ever more,
Lead us as you led before!

Chase him, Pushan, in thy wrath,
Who infests the lonely path,
Robber with his ruthless heart,
Slayer with his secret dart;
Child of clouds, for ever more,
Lead us as you led before!

Trample with thy heavy tread,
On the darksome man of dread,

On the low and lying knave,
Smooth-tongued double-dealing slave;
Child of clouds, for ever more,
Lead us as you led before!

Thou dost pathless forests know,
Thou canst quell the secret foe,
Thou didst lead our fathers right,
Wonder-worker, orb of light;
Grant from thy unfailing store
Wealth and blessings ever more!

Thou hast treasures manifold,
Glittering weapons, arms of gold;
Foremost of the Sons of Light,
Shepherds' God and Leader bright;
Grant from thy unfailing store
Wealth and blessings ever more!

Lead us through the dark defile
Past pursuers dread and vile,
Lead us over pleasant ways
Sheltered by thy saving grace,
Lead us o'er this trackless shore,
And we follow ever more!

Where the grass is rich and green,
And the pasture's beauteous seen,
And the meadow's soft and sweet,
Lead us, safe from scorching heat,
Blessings on thy servants pour,
And we follow ever more!

Fill our hearts with hope and courage,
Fill our homes with food and forage,
Save us from a cruel fate
Feed us and invigorate;
We are suppliants at thy door,
And we follow ever more!

Heart and voice we lift in praise,
Chant our hymns and pious lays,
From the Bright One, good and gracious,
Ask for food and pasture spacious;
Shepherds' God! Befriend the poor,
And we follow ever more!

(*Romesh Dutt*)

From the Panchatantra

2d century B.C., *et seq.*

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

'Tis hard to find in life
A friend, a bow, a wife,
Strong, supple to endure,
In stock and sinew pure,
In time of danger sure.

False friends are common. Yes, but where
True nature links a friendly pair,
The blessing is as rich as rare.

To bitter ends
You trust true friends,
Not wife nor mother,
Not son nor brother.

No long experience alloys
True friendship's sweet and supple joys;
No evil men can steal the treasure;
'Tis death, death only, sets a measure.

(*Arthur W. Ryder*)

FOOL AND FALSE

With the shrewd and upright man
  Seek a friendship rare;
Exercise with shrewd and false
  Superheedful care;

Pity for the upright fool
  Find within your heart;
If a man be fool and false,
  Shun him from the start.

(*Arthur W. Ryder*)

Kalidasa

c. 500

Rarely has a man walked the earth who observed the phenomena of living nature as accurately as he. His nature was one of singular balance, equally at home in a splendid court and on a lonely mountain. For something like fifteen hundred years Kalidasa has been more widely read in India than any other author who wrote in Sanskrit.—ARTHUR W. RYDER.

THE SEASONS

AUTUMN

THE autumn comes, a maiden fair
  In slenderness and grace,
With nodding rice-stems in her hair
  And lilies in her face.
In flowers of grasses she is clad;
  And as she moves along,
Birds greet her with their cooing glad
  Like bracelets' tinkling song.

A diadem adorns the night
  Of multitudinous stars;
Her silken robe is white moonlight,
  Set free from cloudy bars;
And on her face (the radiant moon)
  Bewitching smiles are shown:
She seems a slender maid, who soon
  Will be a woman grown.

Over the rice-fields, laden plants
  Are shivering to the breeze;

While in his brisk caresses dance
  The blossomed-burdened trees;
He ruffles every lily-pond
  Where blossoms kiss and part,
And stirs with lover's fancies fond
  The young man's eager heart.

(*Arthur W. Ryder*)

Bhartrihari

c. 500

In short verses the Hindus excel. Their mastery of form, their play of fancy, their depth and tenderness of feeling, are all exquisite. Of the many who wrote such verses, the greatest is Bhartrihari.—ARTHUR W. RYDER.

TIME

TIME is the root of all this earth;
  These creatures, who from Time had birth,
  Within his bosom at the end
Shall sleep; Time hath nor enemy nor friend.

  All we in one long caravan
  Are journeying since the world began;
  We know not whither, but we know
Time guideth at the front, and all must go.

  Like as the wind upon the field
  Bows every herb, and all must yield,
  So we beneath Time's passing breath
Bow each in turn,—why tears for birth or death?

(*Paul Elmer More*)

ARABIAN

From the Mu'allaqát

Compiled 8th century

Antara

6th century

ABLA

The poets have muddied all the little fountains.

Yet do not my strong eyes know you, far house?

O dwelling of Abla in the valley of Gawa,
Speak to me, for my camel and I salute you.

My camel is as tall as a tower, and I make him stand
And give my aching heart to the wind of the desert.

O erstwhile dwelling of Abla in the valley of Gawa;
And my tribe in the valleys of Hazn and Samma
And in the valley of Motethalem!

Salute to the old ruins, the lonely ruins
Since Oum El Aythan gathered and went away.

Now is the dwelling of Abla
In a valley of men who roar like lions.
It will be hard to come to you, O daughter of Makhram.

. . . .

Abla is a green rush
That feeds beside the water.

But they have taken her to Oneiza
And my tribe feeds in lazy Ghailam valley.

They fixed the going, and the camels
Waked in the night and evilly prepared.

I was afraid when I saw the camels
Standing ready among the tents
And eating grain to make them swift.

I counted forty-two milk camels,
Black as the wings of a black crow.

White and purple are the lilies of the valley,
But Abla is a branch of flowers.

Who will guide me to the dwelling of Abla?

(*E. Powys Mathers*)

From the Mufaddaliyat

Compiled 8th century

Alqamah

6th century

HIS CAMEL

So leave her, and cast care from thy heart with a sturdy mount—a camel that ambles tireless, carrying riders twain;
To Harith, the generous Lord, I drive her unsparing on, with pantings that shake her breast and throb through her ribs and flanks:
A fleet runner whose flesh over sides and where neck meets hump has vanished beneath noon-tide's hot breath and the onward press;
And yet after night's long toil the dawn breaks and finds her fresh as antelope, young and strong, that flees from the hunter's pack:
They crouched by the *artà*-brake, the hunters, and thought to win a safe prey: but she escaped their shafts and pursuing hounds.

So travels my beast, and makes her object a man far off, and little by little gains the way to his bounteous hand.

Yet, thou wast her labor's end—God keep thee from curse, O King! and through all the Desert's sameness sped she, beset with fears.

Towards thee the Pole-stars led, and there where men's feet had passed a track plain to see that wound by cairns over ridges scarred.

There bodies of beasts outworn lay thickly along the road, their bones gleaming white, their hides all shriveled and hard and dry.

I bring her to drink the dregs of cisterns all mire and draff; and if she mislikes it, all the choice is to journey on.

(*Sir Charles Lyall*)

Khansá

7th century

TEARS

Tears, ere thy death, for many a one I shed,
But thine are all my tears since thou art dead.
To comforters I lend my ear apart,
While pain sits ever closer to my heart.

(*R. A. Nicholson*)

Ta'Abbata Sharra

7th century

EVER WATCHFUL

Nor exults he nor complains he; silent bears whate'er befalls him,

Much desiring, much attempting; far the wanderings of his venture.

In one desert noon beholds him; evening finds him in another;

As the wild ass lone he crosses o'er the jagged and headlong ridges.
Swifter than the wind unpausing, onward yet, nor rest nor slackness,
Wild the howling gusts outspeeded in the distance moan and falter,
Light the slumber on his eyelids, yet too heavy all he deems it;
Ever watchful for the moment when to draw the bitter faulchion;
When to plunge it in the heart-blood of the many-mustered foemen.

(*W. G. Palgrave*)

Abd-ar-Rahman I

8th century

THE PALM TREE

In the midst of my garden
Grows a palm-tree;
Born in the West,
Away from the country of palm-trees.

I cried: You are like me,
For you resemble me
In wandering and peregrination,
And the long separation from kith and kin.

You also
Grew up on a foreign soil;
Like me,
You are far from the country of your birth.

May the fertilizing clouds of morning
Water you in exile,
May the beneficent rains besought by the poor
Never forsake you.

(*J. B. Trend*)

From the Hamâsah

Compiled 9th century

Hittân, son of Al-Mu' Allà of Tayyi

HIS CHILDREN

Fortune has brought me down—her wonted way—
from station great and high to low estate;
Fortune has rent away my plenteous store;
of all my wealth honor alone is left.
Fortune has turned my joy to tears; how oft
did Fortune make me laugh with what she gave!
But for these girls, the *kata's* downy brood,
unkindly thrust from door to door as hard—
Far would I roam and wide to seek my bread
in Earth that has no end of breadth and length.
Nay, but our children in our midst, what else
but our hearts are they, walking on the ground?
If but the breeze blow harsh on one of them,
mine eye says no to slumber all night long.

(*Sir Charles Lyall*)

Ibn Darrâj Al-Andalûsi

11th century

THE WING OF SEPARATION

The wing of separation
Bore me away;
The fluttering heart was dismayed
And bore away her senses . . .
Had she but seen me,
When my soul was intent on speeding the journey by
night,
When my sounding steps
Held converse with the demons of the desert—
When I wandered through the waste

In the shadows of night,
While the roar of the lion was heard
From his lair among the reeds—
When the brilliant Pleiades circled,
Like dark-eyed maidens in the green woods;
And the stars were borne round
Like wine-cups,
Filled by a fair maid
And served by a watchful attendant—
When the Milky Way
Was as the gray hairs of age
Upon the head of gloomy night;
And the ardor of my resolution,
And the piercer of darkness
Were equally terrible;
When the eyelids of the stars
Were closed for weariness—
Ah, then she had known
That fate itself obeyed my will
And that I was worthy of the favor of Ibn Aâmir.

(*J. B. Trend*)

Mu'tamid, King of Seville

1040–1095

For though his sun of power went down so long ago that the West has forgotten the colors of his glory, and though the kingdom for which he gave his blood and his children and the years of his life now bows to other rulers, another faith, yet among a beauty-loving race he still preserves—by reason of those lines which wars have not scattered nor Time effaced—a gentle eminence.—Dulcie L. Smith.

THE FOUNTAIN

The sea hath tempered it; the mighty sun
Polished the blade,
And from the limpid sheath the sword leaps forth;
Man hath not made
A better in Damascus—though for slaughter
Hath steel somewhat advantage over water.

WOO NOT THE WORLD

Woo not the world too rashly, for behold,
  Beneath the painted silk and broidering,
  It is a faithless and inconstant thing.
(Listen to me, Mu'tamid, growing old.)

And we—that dreamed youth's blade would never rust,
  Hoped wells from the mirage, roses from the sand—
  The riddle of the world shall understand
And put on wisdom with the robe of dust.

(*Dulcie L. Smith*)

From the Thousand and One Nights

13th century ?

DATES

We grow to the sound of the wind
Playing his flutes in our hair,

Palm tree daughters,
Brown flesh Bedouin,
Fed with light
By our gold father;

We are loved of the free-tented,
The sons of space, the hall-forgetters,
The wide handed, the bright-sworded
Masters of horses.

Who has rested in the shade of our palms
Shall hear us murmur ever above his sleep.

PSALM OF BATTLE

God is praise and glory;
Therefore glory and praise be unto Him
Who led me by the hand in stony places,
Who gave me a treasure of gold and a throne of gold
And set a sword of victory in my hand!

He covered the earth with the shadow of my kingdom,
And fed me when I was a stranger
Among strange peoples;
When I was lowly He accounted me
And He has bound my brow about with triumph.

His enemies fled before my face like cattle;
The Lord breathed upon them and they were not!
Not with the ferment of a generous wine
But with death's evil grape
He has sent them drunken into the darkness.

We died, we died in the battle,
But He has set us upon happy grass
Beside an eternal river of scented honey.

DEATH

Once he will miss, twice he will miss,
  He only chooses one of many hours;
For him nor deep nor hill there is,
  But all's one level plain he hunts for flowers.

LAMENTS

The Wazir Dandan for Prince Sharkan

Wise to have gone so early to reward,
    Child of the sword;
Wise with a single new-bathed eagle's flight
    To have touched the white
Wild roses spread for feet in paradise.
    Ah, my son, wise
Soon to have drained the new and bitter cup
    Which, once drunk up,
Leads straightway to an old immortal wine
    Pressed from God's vine.

Tumadir Al-Khansa for her Brother

Weep! Weep! Weep!
These tears are for my brother,

Henceforth that veil which lies between us,
That recent earth,
Shall not be lifted again.
You have gone down to the bitter water
Which all must taste,
And you went pure, saying:
"Life is a buzz of hornets about a lance point."

But my heart remembers, O son of my father and mother,
I wither like summer grass,
I shut myself in the tent of consternation.

He is dead, who was the buckler of our tribe
And the foundation of our house,
He has departed in calamity.

He is dead, who was the lighthouse of courageous men,
Who was for the brave
As fires lighted upon the mountains.

He is dead, who rode costly horses,
Shining in his garments.
The hero of the long shoulder belt is dead.
The young man of valiance and beauty breathes no more;
The right hand of generosity is withered,
And the beardless king of our tribe shall breathe no more.

He shall be cold beneath his rock.

Say to his mare Alwa
That she must weep
As she runs riderless for ever. . . .

When the red millstone ground the flowers of youth,
You shattered a thousand horses against the squadrons;

High on the groaning flanks of Alwa
You lifted the bright skirts of your silver mail.

You made the lances live,
You shook their beams,
You quenched their beams in red,
O tiger of the double panoply.

White women wandered with disordered veils
And you saved them in the morning.
Your captives were as troops of antelopes
Whose beauty troubles the first drops of rain. . . .

How effortless were your rhymes of combat
Chanted in tumult, O my brother!
They pierced like lances,
They live among our hearts for ever.

Let the stars go out,
Let the sun withdraw his rays,
He was our star and sun.

Who now will gather in the strangers at dusk
When the sad North whistles with her winds?
You have laid down and left in the dust, O wanderers,
Him who nourished you with his flocks
And bared his sword for your salvation.
You set him low in the terrible house
Among a few stakes planted,
You threw down boughs of salamah upon him.
He lies among the tombs of our fathers,
Where the days and the years shall pass over him
As they have passed over our fathers.
Your loss is a great distress to me,
Child of the Solamides,
I shall be glad no more. . . .

While you have tears, O daughters of the Solomides,
Weep! Weep! Weep!

From the Arabic

THE DAYS OF OUR YOUTH

These are the days of our youth, our days of glory and honor.
Pleasure begotten of strength is ours, the sword in our hand.
Wisdom bends to our will, we lead captivity captive,
Kings of our lives and love, receiving gifts from men.

Why do I speak of wisdom? The prize is not for the wisest.
Reason, the dull ox, plows a soil which no joy shall reap.
Folly is fleeter far 'neath the heel of the fearless rider,
Folly the bare-backed steed we bestride, the steed of the plains.

Mine is a lofty ambition, as wide as the world I covet.
Vast is the empire I claim for thee, thou spouse of my soul.
Show me new lands to win, and, by God in heaven, I swear it:
These shall be mine and thine to-night for all time to hold.

Time is our slave and Fortune's. We need not years for fruition.
Here in our hands behold a key which unlocks the world.
Each new day is a life. For us there is no to-morrow.
Love no yesterday knows nor we, but to-day is ours.

See, what a wealth I bring thee, what treasure of myrrh and spices!
Every kingdom of Earth have I sacked to procure thee gold.
All the knowledge that fools have learned at the feet of women,
All that the wise have been taught in tears for thy sake I know.

Give thyself up to Love. There is naught divine but madness.
Give thyself up to me Love's priest in his inmost shrine.
Shut thy eyes on the world, sublime in thy abnegation.
Only the wise who have bowed their will shall receive the prize.

Shut thy eyes on the light. I have nobler dreams to read thee,
Here in the shades of this darkened room, than the sun can show.
Is there not light in my eyes to-night more light than the dreamlight?
See it breaks in streams on thy face; it illumes thy soul.

Let me persuade thy weakness. I see thee here with my reason.
Let me convince thee of love with thy lips till thou cease to think.
Let me enfold thee with words more sweet than the prayers of angels,
Speaking thus with my hand on thy heart till it cease to beat.

Let me assuage thy grief with laughter, thy fear with kisses.
Let me cajole thy doubts with surprise, thy pride with tears.
Let me outshame the shame of thy face, outblush thy blushes.
Let me teach thee what Love can dare and yet dream no shame.

Let me uncover thy bosom and prove to thee its glory.
Let me preach to thee of thyself the live night long.
Let me chant new hymns to thy praise as I kneel and worship,
Rising still like a god from my knees from eve till morn.

Let me discourse of love with my hands and lips and bosom.
Let me explain with my limbs the joy that a soul can feel.
Let me unveil to thy bodily sense thy god incarnate
Taking flesh in a visible form for thy body's need.

Lo, on the mount of Love, the holiest place of holies,
Incense and prayer and the people's shout and the fires have risen.
Love descends on the feast. He mounts the pyre in silence,
Victim and priest and god in one, to thy dreams revealed.

There, the rite is accomplished. Whatever Love knows thou knowest.
Sudden the victim staggers and falls. In the dust it lies.
See the hot blood flows for thy sake, it o'erflows the altar.
Dost thou not feel it stream in thy veins? It still lives in thee.

These are the days of our youth, the days of our dominion.
All the rest is a dream of death and a doubtful thing.
Here we at least have lived, for love is all life's wisdom,
Joy of joys for an hour to-day; then away, farewell!

(*Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*)

PERSIAN

Firdawsí

935–1025

ALAS FOR YOUTH

Much have I labored, much read o'er
Of Arabic and Persian lore,
Collecting tales unknown and known;
Now two and sixty years are flown.
Regret, and deeper woe of sin,
'Tis all that youth has ended in,
And I with mournful thoughts rehearse
Bu Táhir Khusrawáni's verse:
"I mind me of my youth and sigh,
Alas for youth, for youth gone by!"

(*R. A. Nicholson*)

Omar Khayyám

d. 1123

And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar from all other Persian poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his humors and passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.—Edward FitzGerald.

RUBAIYAT

(*in part*)

I

Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
  Drives Night along with them from Heaven, and strikes
The Sultàn's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
  "When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

III

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
  You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
  The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
  The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say:
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
  And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?
  Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

XI

With me along the ſtrip of Herbage ſtrown
That juſt divides the desert from the sown,
  Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne!

XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
  Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
  Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a diſtant Drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
  At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XVIII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep
  And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
  That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
  Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XXI

Ah, my Belovèd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regrets and future Fears:
  To-morrow!—Why To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Seven thousand Years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
  Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
  Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
  Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

XXIX

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence,* like Water willy-nilly flowing;
  And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither,* willy-nilly blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence?
  Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

XXXI

Up from Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
  And many a Knot unraveled by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see;
  Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There was—and then no more of Thee and Me.

XLIV

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
  Were 't not a Shame—were 't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

XLV

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
  The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

LIV

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavor and dispute;
  Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
  Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

LVI

For "Is" and "Is-not" though with Rule and Line,
And "Up-and-down" by Logic I define,
  Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LXIII

Oh, threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies;
  One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,
  Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV

The Revelations of Devout and Learned
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burned,
  Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their comrades, and to Sleep returned.

LXVI

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
  And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered "I Myself am Heaven and Hell:"

LXVII

Heaven but the Vision of fulfilled Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
  Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from shall so soon expire.

LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
  Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;
  Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
  Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXII

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,
  Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

XCI

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
  And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Gardenside

XCII

That even my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
  As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong:
  Have drowned my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

XCVI

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
  The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,
  To which the fainting Traveler might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late
Arreſt the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
  And make the ſtern Recorder otherwise
Enregiſter, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things Entire,
  Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

* * * * * * * *

C

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
  How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain!

CI

And when like her, Oh Sáki, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,
  And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

(*Edward FitzGerald*)

Sa'di

d. 1291

FROM THE GULISTAN

Sadi's favorite mode is a simplicity and tenderness of heart, a delicacy of feeling and judgment, and that exquisitely natural vein in which he relates his many apologues and parables with a sort of sententious and epigrammatic turn.—James Ross.

Friendship

He is no friend who in thine hour of pride
Brags of his love and calls himself thy kin.
He is a friend who hales his fellow in,
And clangs the door upon the wolf outside.

Mesnevi

If livelihood by knowledge were endowed,
None would be poorer than the brainless crowd;
Yet fortune on the fool bestows the prize,
And leaves but themes for wonder to the wise.

The luck of wealth dependeth not on skill,
But only on the aid of Heaven's will:
So it has happened since the world began—
The witless ape outstrips the learned man;

A poet dies of hunger, grief, and cold;
A fool among the ruins findeth gold.

Courage

Whoever hath washed his hands of living
Utters his mind without misgiving.

In straits which no escape afford
The hand takes hold of the edge of the sword.

Help

Vex no man's secret soul—if that can be—
The path of life hath far too many a thorn!
Help whom thou may'st—for surely unto thee
Sharp need of help will e'er the end be borne.

(*Sir Edwin Arnold*)

FROM THE BUSTAN

The Dancer

I heard how, to the beat of some quick tune,
There rose and danced a Damsel like the moon,
Flower-mouthed and Pâri-faced; and all around her
Neck-stretching Lovers gathered close; but, soon

A flickering lamp-flame caught her skirt, and set
Fire to the flying gauze. Fear did beget
Trouble in that light heart! She cried amain.
Quoth one among her worshipers, "Why fret,

Tulip of Love? Th' extinguished fire hath burned
Only one leaf of thee; but I am turned
To ashes—leaf and stalk, and flower and root—
By lamp-flash of thine eyes!"—"Ah, Soul concerned

"Solely with self!"—she answered, laughing low,
"If thou wert Lover thou hadst not said so.
Who speaks of the Belov'd's woe as not his
Speaks infidelity, true Lovers know!"

(*Sir Edwin Arnold*)

Hafiz

d. 1389

Hafiz is the prince of Persian poets, and in his extraordinary gifts adds to some of the attributes of Pindar, Anacreon, Horace, and Burns the insight of a mystic.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

ODES

6

The jewel of the secret treasury
Is still the same as once it was; the seal
Upon Love's treasure casket, and the key,
Are still what thieves can neither break nor steal;
Still among lovers loyalty is found,
And therefore faithful eyes still strew the ground
With the same pearls that mine once strewed for thee.

Question the wandering winds and thou shalt know
That from the dusk until the dawn doth break,
My consolation is that still they blow
The perfume of thy curls across my cheek,
A dart from thy bent brows has wounded me—
Ah, come! my heart still waiteth helplessly,
Has waited ever, till thou heal its pain.

If seekers after rubies there were none,
Still to the dark mines where the gems had lain
Would pierce, as he was wont, the radiant sun,
Setting the stones ablaze. Would'st hide the stain
Of my heart's blood? Blood-red the ruby glows
(And whence it came my wounded bosom knows)
Upon thy lips to show what thou hast done.

Let not thy curls waylay my pilgrim soul,
As robbers use, and plunder me no more!
Years join dead years, but thine extortionate rule
Is still the same, merciless as before.
Sing, Hafiz, sing again of eyes that weep!
For still the fountain of our tears is deep
As once it was, and still with tears is full.

(*Gertrude Lowthian Bell*)

10

THE days of Spring are here! the eglantine,
The rose, the tulip from the dust have risen—
And thou, why liest thou beneath the dust?
Like the full clouds of Spring, these eyes of mine
Shall scatter tears upon the grave thy prison,
Till thou too from the earth thine head shalt thrust.

(*Gertrude Lowthian Bell*)

11

I HAVE borne the anguish of love, which ask me not to describe:
I have tasted the poison of absence, which ask me not to relate.

Far through the world have I roved, and at length I have chosen
A sweet creature (a ravisher of hearts), whose name ask me not to disclose.

The flowing of my tears bedews her footsteps
In such a manner as ask me not to utter.

On yesternight from her own mouth with my own ears I heard
Such words as pray ask me not to repeat.

Why dost thou bite thy lip at me? What dost thou not hint (*that I may have told?*)
I have devoured a lip like a ruby: but whose, ask me not to mention.

Absent from thee, and the sole tenant of my cottage,
I have endured such tortures, as ask me not to enumerate.

Thus am I, HAFIZ, arrived at extremity in the ways of Love,
Which, alas! ask me not to explain.

(*John Hindley*)

HEBREW

From the Old Testament

10th-1st centuries B.C.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 8

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Thou madeſt him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beaſts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a ſtrong man to run a race.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the teſtimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can underſtand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be

upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Psalm 42

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Why are thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

206352

Psalm 95

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship, and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.

To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them,

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Psalm 133

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to

the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

THE BOOK OF JOB

Job's Curse

Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest

With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;

Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Job's Entreaty

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth: and thou destroyest the hope of man.

Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

Then the Lord Answered

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth; declare if thou knowest it all.

Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof.

That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,

and that thou shouldeſt know the paths to the house thereof?

Knoweſt thou it, because thou waſt then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

Haſt thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or haſt thou seen the treasures of the hail,

Which I have reserved againſt the time of trouble, againſt the day of battle and war?

By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the eaſt wind upon the earth?

Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canſt thou mark when the hinds do calve?

Canſt thou number the months that they fulfill? or knoweſt thou the time when they bring forth?

They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they caſt out their sorrows.

Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

The range of the mountains is his paſture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by the crib?

Canſt thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

Wilt thou truſt him, because his ſtrength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labor to him?

Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

Gaveſt thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the oſtrich?

Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in duſt,

And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beaſt may break them.

She is hardened againſt her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear:

Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding.

What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Haſt thou given the horse ſtrength? haſt thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Canſt thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his noſtrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his ſtrength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth againſt him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and ſtretch her wings toward the south?

Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her neſt on high?

She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the ſtrong place.

From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

Out of the Whirlwind

Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?

Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?

Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?

Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.

His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.

One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.

His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

In his neck remaineth strength and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid; by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.

Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.

Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

ECCLESIASTES

Cast Thy Bread upon the Waters

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves

upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Remember Now Thy Creator

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Judah Ha-Levi

1085–1140

TO ZION

Art thou not hungry for thy children, Zion,—
Thy sons far-scattered through an alien world?
From earth's four corners, over land and sea,
The heavy-hearted remnant of thy flock
Now send thee greeting: "Know that as the dew
Falls daily on the ancient slopes of Hermon,
So daily on the faces of thy children
Tears of vain-longing fall." And as for me,
When I remember thee, the Desolate,
My voice is like the jackal's in the night,
A wailing and a lamentation old;
But when a dream of resurrection wakes—
A momentary glory—then my voice
Breaks like the harp's into a jubilant ringing.
Thy names are on my lips, and in my heart
Restless desire: Beth-El, Mach'nayim, P'niel—
Assemblies once of the elect—on you
The glory of His name was shed, for you
The gates were open flung, and with a light
Neither of sun, moon, stars, your beauty shone.
Where on the dearest of His chosen ones
God poured his spirit, let me pour my heart.
I will pass to Hebron, where the ancient graves
Still wait for me, and wander in the dusk
Of the forests of Carmel. I will go to Gilead
And from Gilead pass to Habarim and Hor,
And stand upon the summit of the mountains
Where once the unforgotten brothers stood
And the light of them was seen throughout the world.
There let me fall to earth and press my lips
Into the dust, and weep thy desolation
Till I am blind, and, blind, still comfort thee.
I would to God that I were turned to dust
So that the wind could scatter me upon thee.
What comfort is in life for me, since now

Thine eagles have become the prey of vultures?
What pleasure in the light of day, since now
Thy lions, dead, are less than living dogs?
Oh, I can weep no more: enough, the cup
Of bitterness is full and overflows,
O Zion, beauty and gladness of the world,
Thine is all love and grace, and unto thee
In love and grace we are for ever chained.
We who in thy happiness were happy
Are broken in thy desolation. Each
In the prison of his exile bows to earth,
And turns him toward thy gates. Scattered and lost,
We will remember till the end of time
The cradle of our childhood, from a thousand seas
Turn back and seek again thy hills and vales.
Glory of Pathros, glory of Shinar,
Compared to the light and truth that streamed from thee,
Are dust and vanity: and in all the world
Whom shall I find to liken to thy seers,
Thy princes, thy elect, thy anointed ones?
The kingdoms of the heathen pass like shadows,
Thy glory and thy name endure for ever.
God made His home in thee: well for the man
Who makes God's choice his own, with thee to dwell.
And happy, happy the man who vigil keeps
Until the day break over thee again,
Until thy chosen are returned to thee,
And thy first youth in glory is renewed.

(*Maurice Samuel*)

Chaim Nachman Bialik

1873–

FROM "SONGS OF THE PEOPLE"

I

Two steps from my garden rail
Sleeps my well beneath its pail:
    Every sabbath comes my love
    And I let him drink thereof.

All the world is sleeping now
Like the fruit beneath the bough.
    Father, mother, both are gone
    And my heart wakes here alone.

And the pail awakes with me,
Dripping, dripping, drowsily:
    Drops of gold and crystal clear . . .
    And my love is drawing near.

Hist! I think that something stirred;
Was it he, or but a bird?
    Dearest friend, my lover dear,
    There is no one with me here.

By the trough we sit and speak,
Hand in hand and cheek to cheek;
    Hear this riddle: Can you tell
    Why the pitcher seeks the well?

That you cannot answer, nor
What the pail is weeping for?
    Morn to even, drop by drop,
    Fall its tears and cannot stop.

This then tell me, why my breast
Daylong, nightlong is oppressed.
    Spoke my mother truth in saying
    That your heart from me was straying?

And my lover answered: See,
Enemies have slandered me.
    Ere another year be gone,
    We shall marry, foolish one.

On that golden day of days
Shall the summer be ablaze.
    Fruited branches overhead
    Shall in benediction spread.

Friend and kinsman, young and old
Shall be gathered to behold,
And with music and with mirth
They shall come to lead us forth.

And the bridal canopy
In this place shall lifted be.
I shall slip a ring of gold
On this finger that I hold.

And pronounce the blessing: "Thee
God makes consecrate to me."
And my enemies shall there
Burst with envy and despair.

(*Maurice Samuel*)

THE DEAD OF THE WILDERNESS [1]

(*in part*)

YONDER great shadow—that blot on the passionate glare of the desert—
'Tis not an army of lions couched in the sun with their young ones,
'Tis not the pride of the forests of Bashan uprooted and fallen:
Those are the Dead of the Wilderness under the sunlight recumbent.
Hard by their tents are they laid, like children of Anak for stature,
Stretched on the desolate sands like numberless lions in slumber;
Under the might of their limbs the floor of the desert is hollowed.
Armed as for battle they sleep and clad in the armor of giants;
Swords like crags at their heads and spears twixt their shoulders protruding,
Sound to their girdle the quiver and firm in the sand is the lance thrust.

[1] The subject of this poem is derived from a Talmudic legend which says that the Jews who left Egypt did not die in the desert, as the Bible tells, but were cast into slumber.—(Tr.)

Deep in the earth are their heads sunk, heavy with tangles neglected,
Matted and monstrous and vast, and uncouth as the mane of a lion;
Matted and monstrous and vast are their beards like to tangles of serpents.
Strong are their faces and burnished, and darkened to bronze are their eyelids,
Targets to arrows of sunlight and rocks to the fury of tempests.
Hard are their foreheads and grim and changeless upturned to the heavens,
Eyes that are cruel and terrible peer through the tangle of eyebrows.
Cast as of lava upthrown from volcanoes and hardened their breasts are
Lifted like anvils of iron that wait for the blow of the hammer;
Yet though the hammer of time beats long and unceasing upon them,
Like to the stone that enfolds it the strength of their hearts sleeps for ever.
Only, the faces unmoving, the breasts multitudinous, naked,
Strangely are covered, like ancient memorials, with runes of the desert
Graven by arrows and swords which the tempests have tossed and uplifted.
And when the eagle descends in his flight to behold he shall read there,
Graven on breast and on brow, the tale of unbroken endurance,
How many arrows and spears these breasts have encountered and shattered.
Sunlight and darkness revolve and cycle succeeds unto cycle,
Stormwinds awake and are stilled and the desert turns back to its silence.

Far ſtand the crags, as amazed in beholding the firſt things created,
Clothed by the silence with splendor, the proud, the eternally lonely,
Limitless, limitless ſtretches the wilderness, lifeless and soundless.
Loſt to the end of all time is the jubilant voice of the giants,
Laid into ſtillness for ever the tumult that followed their footſteps;
Where they once trod are now lifted the sandhills and crags of the desert.
Silence has breathed on the mighty and caſt into slumber their fierceness.
And the hot winds of the desert eaten their ſtrength and their beauty.

Fierce burns the sun on the blades gigantic and wears them to brightness;
Blinding arrows of sunlight shot at the heads of the lances
Break into myriads of sparks that are dashed on the breaſts of the sleepers
Lying there bared to the desolate sunlight for ever and ever.
Dried by the withering eaſt-wind, duſt of their bodies is lifted,
Whirled into other lands, scattered under the footſteps of pygmies;
Jackals there nuzzle with unclean snouts in the ruins of heroes.
No one remembers among them the old generation of giants
Fallen and turned into voiceless ſtone in the sands of the desert. . . .
Sometimes a shadow is born alone on the face of the desert,
Floats on the sands till it reaches the ranks of the army of sleepers,

Trembles a moment above them and breaks into circles of motion,
Suddenly chooses a body outſtretched and over it ſtands and is moveless;
And the body beneath it is darkened and half of its neighbor.
Suddenly quivers the air as the pinions ſtupendous are folded.
Full with his weight like a meteor descending he falls on his victim—
One of the eagle-kings, crag-born, crooked of beak and of talon.
Over the breaſt of the sleeper a granite-like talon is lifted;
Yet but an inſtant and granite on granite will ring in the ſtillness;
And in that inſtant he pauses and ſtands with his talon uplifted,
Stilled and rebuked in his pride by the loftier pride of the sleeper;
Wondering ſtands, then unfolds the ſtrength of his pinions and rises,
Beating great waves through the air and screaming in ſtretches of sunlight,
Scales untiring the measureless heights and is loſt in the splendor.
Long, long after ſtill flutters, held faſt on the point of a lancehead,
One gray feather that fell unseen and unmarked was abandoned,
Flutters and ſtrains at the lance-head and fluttering earthwards is wafted.
Silence returns to the desert and peace to the sleep of the heroes.
Sometimes when midday is hot and the desert swoons under the sunlight,
Slides from its faſtness a serpent, vaſt as the beam of a weaver,

Issues to warm on the sands the glistening rings of his body.
Now he shrinks on himself, coils himself moveless and breathless,
Languid with joy in the warmth and bathing in light as in waters;
Now he wakes and uncoils and stretches his length in the sunlight,
Opens the width of his jaws and his scales are like network of lightnings,
Spangled and knitted in splendor, a lonely delight in the desert.
Sudden he starts from his languor, leaps into rigid attention,
Bends and unwinds on the sand, then swiftly he glides from his station
Over the waste till he reaches the army of sleepers and stands then,
Lifted one-third in the air, like a column of bright hieroglyphics,
Raises his crown and outstretches his neck and his eyeballs green sparkle.
Swaying he broods on the slumbering army from margin to margin.
Vast is the soundless encampment and countless the dead it encloses,
Numberless, numberless faces and foreheads exposed to the heavens.

Then like a flash reawakens the hatred of dead generations,
Gleams in the start of his eyes like a brand that is sudden uncovered.
Hatred instinctive and ancient runs through the shuddering body.
Trembling he lowers his head and darts with it hither and thither,
Hangs then suspended an instant and stares in the face of a sleeper.

Under their hoods are his eyeballs twin centers of hatred and fury;
Hissing he opens his jaws and the flash of his fangs is uncovered—
And in that instant he pauses, sinks on the coils of his body,
Stilled and rebuked in his rage by the bitterer rage of the sleeper,—
Sinks and uncircles his length and turns from the visage of granite,
Moves off, a rhythm of waves till his splendor is lost in the distance.
Silence returns to the desert and peace to the sleep of the heroes.

Moonlight descends on the waste and sleeps on the measureless broadness,
Lays on the desert a garment speckled with light and with shadow.
Pallid the wilderness league after league rolls from dimness to dimness.
Broad at the foot of the towering crags are their shadows recumbent,
Couched like dragons primeval, things from the dawn of creation.
Gathered in monstrous conspiracy under the cover of darkness—
They will arise ere the morning, return to the caverns they came from.
Mournful the moon from her loneliness looks on the mystery threefold—
Wilderness, midnight and monsters crept out from the dawn of creation.
Lapped is the desert in merciless dreams of its old desolation,
Wails in its dreams, and its wailing half-uttered is broken and stifled.

But there are moments when, tortured too long by the silence eternal,
Wild with unbearable sickness of æons, the desert uprises,
Wakens and rages for vengeance against the inhuman Creator,
Raises a column of sand to ascend to the fastness of heaven,
Once and for ever to meet Him and shatter the throne of His glory,
Once for the torture eternal to loose the floods of its fury,
Sweep his whole world into darkness and bring back the kingdom of chaos. . . .
Then the Creator is stirred, and His anger envelops the heavens,
Like a great cover of iron, He bends them to blot out the desert.
Red from the blast of His breath, the flame of His anger outbreaking
Wraps the desert in fury and scatters its crags in a furnace.
Stubborn and bitter the desert responds, and new furies are loosened,
Rise from the bowels of Hell, and all earth is in fury confounded.
Seized by the madness that spins like a vehement wheel in the vastness
Tigers and lions, with manes uplifted and eyeballs aglitter,
Join in the riot infernal, and howl with the voice of the tempest,
Lifted and torn by the strength of the tempest like gossamer insects.
And in that instant—
Wakes the terrible power that slumbered in chains,
Suddenly stirs and arises the old generation of heroes,
Mighty in battle: their eyes are like lightning, like blades are their faces.

Then flies the hand to the sword.
Sixty myriads of voices—a thunder of heroes—awaken,
Crash through the tempest and tear asunder the rage
of the desert
Round them in wildness and blindness:
And they cry
"We are the mighty!
The last generation of slaves and the first generation
of freemen!
Alone our hand in its strength
Tore from the pride of our shoulders the yoke of
bondage.
We lifted our heads to the heavens and behold their
broadness was narrow in the pride of our eyes,
So we turned to the desert, we said to the Wilderness:
'Mother!'
Yea, on the tops of the crags, in the thickness of clouds,
With the eagles of heaven we drank from her fountains
of freedom.
And who is lord of us?
Even now, though the God of vengeance has shut the
desert upon us,
A song of strength and revolt has reached us, and we
arise.
To arms! To arms! Form ranks! Forward!
Forward into the heavens and the wrath thereof.
Behold us! We will ascend
With the tempest!
Though the Lord has withdrawn His hand from us,
And the Ark stands moveless in its place,
Still we will ascend—alone!
Even under the eye of His wrath, daring the lightning
of His countenance,
We will carry with storm the citadels of the hills,
And face to face in combat encounter the armed foe!
Listen!
The storm, too, calls unto us—'Courage and daring!'
To arms! To arms! Let the hills be shattered and the
mountains blasted into dust,

Or let our lifeless bodies be heaped in countless cairns.
Forward!
On to the hills!"

. . . . . .

And in that instant the desert is wild with a fierce anger—
And who shall conquer it?
In the storm goes up a terrible voice, a mingling of cries.
It must surely
That the desert is bringing to birth a deed of evil,
A bitter thing, a cruel and a terrible. . . .

Passed is the tempest. The desert is silent, and pure is the silence.
Bright is the broadness of heaven, and marvelous quiet beneath it.
Now from their terror awaking, the caravans trapped in the tempest
Rise from their crouching and call on their God and adore Him and praise Him.
Still in the sand are the sixty myriads of heroes aslumber.
Darkened their faces, for death has brought them to peace with their Maker.
No man knoweth the place of their slumber. The crags of the desert,
Split by the strength of their rising, over them closed in their falling.
Stillness returns as of old. Desolate stretches the desert.

(*Maurice Samuel*)

Yehoash

(*Solomon Bloomgarden*)
1870–1926

AN OLD SONG
(Yiddish)

In the blossom-land Japan
Somewhere thus an old song ran.

Said a warrior to a smith
"Hammer me a sword forthwith.
Make the blade
Light as wind on water laid.
Make it long
As the wheat at harvest song.
Supple, swift
As a snake, without rift,
Full of lightnings, thousand-eyed!
Smooth as silken cloth and thin
As the web that spiders spin.
And merciless as pain, and cold."

"On the hilt what shall be told?"

"On the sword's hilt, my good man,"
Said the warrior of Japan,
"Trace for me
A running lake, a flock of sheep
And one who sings her child to sleep."

(*Marie Syrkin*)

EGYPTIAN

From the Book of the Dead

3500 B.C., *et seq.*

Both external detail and central faith of the Egyptian religion are incorporated in the Chapters of Coming Forth by Day, commonly known as the Book of the Dead. About 3500 B.C., when the first Chapter was set down by the scribes, many of the symbols were already so ancient that the men who wrote them were ignorant of their significance. Yet all were retained, because all were holy to the traditional-minded people of the Nile. . . . This race loved life and pleasure with a fierce intensity; all the somber pomp of the ritual of the dead had as its object the prolongation of an existence too delightful to relinquish. It is erroneous to picture the early Egyptians as an austere, funereal people. . . . Their theology, their sacraments, and their conception of the after life are based on a single doctrine; eternal life manifested through eternal living forms.—ROBERT HILLYER.

THE DEAD MAN ARISETH AND SINGETH A HYMN TO THE SUN

HOMAGE to thee, O Ra, at thy tremendous rising!
Thou rises! Thou shines! the heavens are rolled aside!
Thou art the King of Gods, thou art the All-comprising,
From thee we come, in thee are deified.

Thy priests go forth at dawn; they wash their hearts
with laughter;
Divine winds move in music across thy golden strings.
At sunset they embrace thee, as every cloudy rafter
Flames with reflected color from thy wings.

Thou sailest over the zenith, and thy heart rejoices;
Thy Morning Boat and Evening Boat with fair winds
meet together;

Before thy face the goddess Maat exalts her fateful Feather,
And at thy name the halls of Anu ring with voices.

O Thou Perfect! Thou Eternal! Thou Only One!
Great Hawk that flies with the flying Sun!
Between the Turquoise Sycamores that rises, young for ever,
Thine image flashing on the bright celestial river.

Thy rays are on all faces; Thou art inscrutable.
Age after age thy life renews its eager prime.
Time whirls its dust beneath thee; thou art immutable,
Maker of Time, thyself beyond all Time.

Thou passest through the portals that close behind the night,
Gladdening the souls of them that lay in sorrow.
The True of Word, the Quiet Heart, arise to drink thy light;
Thou art To-day and Yesterday; Thou are To-morrow!

Homage to thee, O Ra, who wakest life from slumber!
Thou rises! Thou shinest! Thy radiant face appears!
Millions of years have passed,—we can not count their number,—
Millions of years shall come. Thou art above the years!

HE HOLDETH FAST TO THE MEMORY OF HIS IDENTITY

In the Great House, and in the House of Fire,
On the dark night of counting all the years,
On the dark night when months and years are numbered,—
O let my name be given back to me!

When the Divine One on the Eastern Stairs
Shall cause me to sit down with him in peace,
And every god proclaims his name before me,—
Let me remember then the name I bore!

HE APPROACHETH THE HALL OF JUDGMENT

O my Heart, my Mother, my Heart, my Mother,
The seed of my being, my earthly existence,
O stay with me still in the Hall of the Princes,
In the presence of the God who keepeth the Balance.
And when thou art weighed in the scale with the feather
Of Truth, then render no judgment against me;
Let not the Lords of the Trial cry before me:
He hath wrought Evil and spoken Untruth!

And ye, divine Gods, cloud-enthroned with your scepters,
At the weighing of words, speak me fair to Osiris.
Lift up my cause to the Forty-two Judges,
And let me not die yet again in Amentet.
Behold, O my Heart, if there be not a parting
Between us, our name shall be one with to-morrow,
Yea, Millions-of-Years is the name we have written,
Yea, Millions-of-Years, O my Mother, my Heart!

HE IS DECLARED TRUE OF WORD

"Thus saith the great god Thoth,
The judge of Right and Truth,
Unto the Company of Gods
Who sit before Osiris.

"Now verily this heart
Was weighed, and it is pure.
No wickedness was found in him
Whose heart withstood the Balance."

And thus respond the gods
Who sit before Osiris,
"Thy words are true, let him come in
And live in peace for ever.

"Give him a house amid
The everlasting Fields.
Let not Oblivion devour
The soul that is triumphant."

Thus Horus, son of Isis,
Saith to divine Osiris,
"O Father, I have brought to thee
This vindicated spirit.

"His deeds have been adjudged,
His heart weighed in the Balance;
Grant him thy cakes and ale, and grant
Him welcome in thy presence."

Thus saith the living soul,
"Behold, O Lord of lords,
Here to thy presence am I come,
Sinless before Osiris.

"Thou art the Beautiful,
The Prince of all the World,
Thee have I loved, O favor me,
And make me thy Beloved."

HE COMETH FORTH INTO THE DAY

I AM here, I have traversed the Tomb, I behold thee,
Thou who art strong!
I have passed through the Underworld, gazed on Osiris,
Scattered the night.

I have come, I have gazed on my Father, Osiris,
I am his son.
I am the son who loveth his Father,
I am beloved.

I have made me a path through the western horizon,
Even as God.
I have followed his footsteps, and won through his magic
Millions of years.

The Gate between Heaven and Earth standeth open,
  Glad is my path.
Hail, every god! every soul! out of darkness
  Shineth my light!

Like the Hawk I went in; I come forth like the Phœnix,
  Star of the dawn.
In the beautiful world by the bright Lake of Horus,
  Riseth the Day.

HE MAKETH HIMSELF ONE WITH THE ONLY GOD, WHOSE LIMBS ARE THE MANY GODS

O EVERLASTING Kingdom of the Scepter,
O Resting-place where Ra's bright boat is moored,
O White Crown of the Form which is divine!
I come! I am the Child! I am the Child!
My hair is Nu, my face the disk of Ra,
My eyes are Hathor, and my neck is Isis;—
Each member of my body is a god,
My flesh and bones, the names of Living Gods.
Jhoth shelters me, for always, day by day.
I come as Ra, I come as he whose name
Is yet unknown. I come as Yesterday,
As Prophet of the million years to be
For nations and for peoples still untold.
I am the Child who marcheth down the road
Of Yesterday, To-day, and of To-morrow.
I am the One, the Only One, who goeth
Forever round his course through all horizons;
Whose moment is in your bodies, but whose forms
Rest in their temple, secret and unveiled;
Who holdeth you in his hand, but whom no hand
Can ever hold; who knoweth your name and season,
But whom you can not know, nor any mortal;
For whom the days return in constant passing,
Moving in splendor toward the end of time.

Yea, I am He, and shall not die again;
Nor men, nor sainted dead, nor even gods
Shall drag me back from my immortal path!

HE WALKETH BY DAY

I AM Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow,
The Divine Hidden Soul who created the gods,
And who feedeth the blessed.

I am Lord of the Risers from Death,
Whose Forms are the lamps in the House of the Dead,
Whose shrine is the Earth.

When the sky is illumined with crystal,
Then gladden my road and broaden my path
And clothe me in light.

Keep me safe from the Sleeper in Darkness,
When eventide closeth the eyes of the god
And the door by the wall.

In the dawn I have opened the Sycamore;
My Form is the form of all women and men,
My spirit is God.

HE ESTABLISHETH HIS TRIUMPH

HAIL, thou who shinest from the Moon
And walketh through the crowded night
Lifting high thy torch!

I also come, a Shining Soul
Standing firm upon my feet
Despite my shadowy foes.

Open wide the Gate of Death
For me who bear the Rod of Gold
Victorious through the Dark!

HE KNOWETH THE SOULS OF THE WEST

HIGH on the Mountain of Sunrise where standeth the Temple of Sebek,
There lieth a serpent of flint and glistening plates of metal.

His name is The Dweller in Fire, and he is the foe of the Morning,
He stoppeth the Boat of Ra, and wrappeth the Boatman in slumber.
But he shall be held in restraint and the Boat of Ra sail onward,
Yea, I am the Man who restraineth the Serpent with mighty enchantment
And fettereth the foe of the Sunrise till Ra resume the horizon.
I, even I, have fettered him, and greeted the Souls of the West,
The Lord of the Mountain of Sunset, and Hathor, the Lady of Evening.

HE IS LIKE THE LOTUS

I AM the pure lotus,
Springing up in splendor
Fed by the breath of Ra.

Rising into sunlight,
Out of soil and darkness,
I blossom in the Field.

HE SINGETH IN THE UNDERWORLD

PURE is the body on the Earth,
The Spirit in the Field;
Pure are the praises from my mouth
Happy with two-fold joy.

The Serpent dieth in the place
Established by the gods.
Osiris liveth, and his throne
Is set upon the waters.

Thy beauties are a flowing stream
Resting the traveler,
A house of festival, where all
Adore their chosen gods.

Thy beauties are a columned court
With incense burned to Ra.
Thy face is brighter than the hall
Where shineth the full moon.

Thy hair is rippling like the hair
Of women from the East,
And blacker than the doors which guard
The midnight underworld.

Thy face is azure blue, and bright
As lapis lazuli;
The rays of Ra are on thy face.
Thy garments are of gold.

Thine eyebrows are twin goddesses
Who sit enthroned in peace,
And when thy nostrils breathe, the winds
Of heaven bend the grain.

Thine eyes look on the Mount of Dawn;
Thy hands are crystal pools;
Thy knees are sedges where the birds
Sing in their golden nest.

Thy feet are on the happy path;
O thou, the favored one,
Thou bathest in the Lake of God,
And goest on thy way.

THE OTHER WORLD

Here are cakes for thy body,
Cool water for thy throat,
Sweet breezes for thy nostrils,
And thou art satisfied.

No longer dost thou stumble
Upon thy chosen path,
From thy mind all evil
And darkness fall away.

Here by the river,
Drink and bathe thy limbs,
Or cast thy net, and surely
It shall be filled with fish.

The holy cow of Hapi
Shall give thee of her milk,
The ale of gods triumphant
Shall be thy daily draught.

White linen is thy tunic,
Thy sandals shine with gold;
Victorious thy weapons,
That death come not again.

Now upon the whirlwind
Thou followest thy Prince,
Now thou hast refreshment
Under the leafy tree.

Take wings to climb the zenith,
Or sleep in Fields of Peace;
By day the Sun shall keep thee,
By night the rising Star.

ADORATION OF THE DISK BY KING AKHNATEN AND PRINCESS NEFER NEFERIU ATEN

Thy dawn, O Ra, opens the new horizon,
And every realm that thou hast made to live
Is conquered by thy love, as joyous Day
Follows thy footsteps in delightful peace.

And when thou settest, all the world is bleak;
Houses are tombs where blind men lie in death;
Only the lion and the serpent move
Through the black oven of the sightless night.

Dawn in the East again! the land's awake,
And men leap from their slumber with a song;
They bathe their bodies, clothe them with fresh garments,
And lift their hands in happy adoration.

The cattle roam again across the fields;
Birds flutter in the marsh, and lift their wings
Also in adoration, and the flocks
Run with delight through all the pleasant meadows.

Both north and south along the dazzling river
Ships raise their sails and take their course before thee;
And in the ocean, all the deep-sea fish
Swim to the surface to drink in thy light.

For thou art all that lives, the seed of men,
The son within his mother's womb who knows
The comfort of thy presence near, the babe
To whom thou givest words and growing wisdom;

The chick within the egg, whose breath is thine,
Who runneth from its shell, chirping its joy,
And dancing on its small, unsteady legs
To greet the splendor of the rising sun.

Thy heart created all, this teeming earth,
Its people, herds, creatures that go afoot,
Creatures that fly in air, both land and sea,
Thou didst create them all within thy heart.

Men and their fates are thine, in all their stations,
Their many languages, their many colors,
All thine, and we who from the midst of peoples,
Thou madest different, Master of the Choice.

And lo, I find thee also in my heart,
I, Khu en Aten, find thee and adore.
O thou, whose dawn is life, whose setting, death,
In the great dawn, then lift up me, thy son.

(*Robert Hillyer*)

GREEK

Homeric Hymns

7th century B.C. ?

HYMN TO EARTH THE MOTHER OF ALL

O UNIVERSAL Mother, who dost keep
From everlasting thy foundations deep,
Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee!
All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,
All things that fly, or on the ground divine
Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine;
These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee
Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree
Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway
Is held; thy power both gives and takes away!
Happy are they whom thy mild favors nourish;
All things unstinted round them grow and flourish;
For them, endures the life-sustaining field
Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield
Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.
Such honored dwell in cities fair and free,
The homes of lovely women, prosperously;
Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,
And their fresh daughters free from care and sadness,
With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,
On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,
Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee
Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou wife of starry Heaven,
Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given
A happy life for this brief melody,
Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

Alcman

c. 680 B.C.

FRAGMENT

THE mountain summits sleep, glens, cliffs, and caves
  Are silent;—all the black earth's reptile brood,
  The bees, the wild beasts of the mountain wood;
In depths beneath the dark red ocean's waves
  Its monsters rest; whilst, wrapt in bower and spray,
  Each bird is hush'd, that stretch'd its pinions to the day.

(*Thomas Campbell*)

Alcœus

610 B.C.

THE STORM

JOVE descends in sleet and snow,
Howls the vexed and angry deep;
Every stream forgets to flow,
Bound in winter's icy sleep,
Ocean wave and forest hoar
To the blast responsive roar.

Drive the tempest from your door,
Blaze on blaze your hearthstone piling,
And unmeasured goblets pour
Brimful, high with nectar smiling.
Then, beneath your poet's head
Be a downy pillow spread.

(*John Hermann Merivale*)

Sappho

Judging even from the mutilated fragments fallen within our reach from the broken altar of her sacrifice of song, I for one have always agreed with all Grecian tradition in thinking Sappho to be beyond all question and comparison the very greatest poet that ever lived.—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

FRAGMENTS

HESPERUS THE BRINGER

O HESPERUS, thou bringest all good things—
  Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,

To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
  The welcome ſtall to the o'erlabored ſteer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthſtone clings,
  Whate'er our household gods proteſt of dear,
Are gathered round us by thy look of reſt;
Thou bring'ſt the child too to its mother's breaſt.

(*Lord Byron*)

One Girl

1

Like the sweet apple which reddens upon
  the topmoſt bough,
A-top on the topmoſt twig,—which the
  pluckers forgot, somehow,—
Forget it not, nay, but got it not, for none
  could get it till now.

2

Like the wild hyacinch flower which on the
  hills is found,
Which the passing feet of the shepherds
  for ever tear and wound,
Until the purple blossom is trodden in the
  ground.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Mother, I Cannot Mind My Wheel

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;
  My fingers ache, my lips are dry;
Oh! if you felt the pain I feel!
  But oh, who ever felt as I!

(*Walter Savage Landor*)

The Dust of Timas

This duſt was Timas; and they say
That almoſt on her wedding day
She found her bridal home to be
The dark house of Persephone.

And many maidens, knowing then
That she would not come back again,
Unbound their curls; and all in tears,
They cut them off with sharpened shears.

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Round About Me

Round about me hum the winds of autumn,
Cool between the apple boughs: and slumber,
Flowing from the quivering leaves to earthward,
Spreads as a river.

Full Moon

Off in the twilight hung the low full moon,
And all the women stood before it grave,
As round an altar. Thus at holy times
The Cretan damsels dance melodiously
With delicate feet about the sacrifice,
Trampling the tender bloom of the soft grass.

Forever Dead

Death shall be death forever unto thee,
Lady, with no remembrance of thy name
Then or thereafter; for thou gatherest not
The roses of Pieria, loving gold
Above the Muses. Even in Hades' House
Wander thou shalt unmarked, flitting forlorn
Among the shadowy, averted dead.

(*William Ellery Leonard*)

Theognis

540 B.C.

HOPE

For human nature Hope remains alone
Of all the deities; the rest are flown.
Faith is departed; Truth and Honor dead;
And all the Graces too, my friends, are fled.

The scanty specimens of living worth,
Dwindled to nothing, and extinct on earth.
Yet whilst I live and view the light of heaven,
Since hope remains and never has been driven
From the distracted world— the single scope
Of my devotion is to worship Hope.
When hecatombs are slain, and altars burn,
When all the deities adored in turn,
Let Hope be present; and with Hope, my friend,
Let every sacrifice commence and end.
Yes, Insolence, Injustice, every crime,
Rapine and Wrong, may prosper for a time;
Yet shall they travel on to swift decay,
Who tread the crooked path and hollow way.

(*John Hookham Frere*)

POVERTY

For noble minds, the worst of miseries,
Worse than old age, or wearisome disease,
Is Poverty. From Poverty to flee,
From some tall precipice into the sea,
It were a fair escape to leap below!
In Poverty, dear Kyrnus, we forego
Freedom in word and deed, body and mind;
Action and thought are fetter'd and confin'd.
Let me then fly, dear Kyrnus, once again!
Wide as the limits of the land and main,
From these entanglements; with these in view,
Death is the lighter evil of the two.

(*John Hookham Frere*)

Anacreon and Anacreontics

6th century B.C. *et seq.*

THE GRASSHOPPER

Happy insect! what can be
In happiness compar'd to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy morning's gentle wine!

Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,
Nature self's thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing;
Happier than the happiest king!
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee;
All that summer hours produce;
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plow;
Farmer he, and landlord thou!
Thou dost innocently joy;
Nor does thy luxury destroy;
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country-hinds with gladness hear,
Prophet of the ripen'd year!
Thee Phœbus loves, and does inspire;
Phœbus is himself thy sire.
To thee, of all things upon earth,
Life's no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect, happy, thou
Dost neither age nor winter know;
But, when thou'st drunk, and danc'd and sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous and wise withal,
Epicurean animal!)—
Sated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

(*Abraham Cowley*)

AGE

Oft am I by the women told,
"Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old;
Look! how thy hairs are falling all;
Poor Anacrean, how they fall!"—
Whether I grow old or no,
By the effects I do not know;

But this I know, without being told,
'Tis time to live, if I grow old;
'Tis time short pleasures now to take,
Of little life the best to make,
And manage wisely the last stake.

(*Abraham Cowley*)

BEAUTY

Horns to bulls wise Nature lends;
Horses she with hoofs defends;
Hares with nimble feet relieves;
Dreadful teeth to lions gives;
Fishes learn through streams to slide;
Birds through yielding air to glide;
Men with courage she supplies;
But to women these denies.
What then gives she? Beauty, this
Both their arms and armor is:
She, that can this weapon use,
Fire and sword with ease subdues.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

THE PICTURE

Painter, by unmatch'd desert
Master of the Rhodian art,
Come, my absent mistress take,
As I shall describe her: make
First her hair, as black as bright,
And if colors so much right
Can but do her, let it too
Smell of aromatic dew;
Underneath this shade, must thou
Draw her alabaster brow;
Her dark eyebrows so dispose
That they neither part nor close,
But by a divorce so slight
Be disjoin'd, may cheat the sight:

From her kindly killing eye
Make a flash of lightning fly,
Sparkling like Minerva's, yet
Like Cythera's mildly sweet:
Roses in milk swimming seek
For the pattern of her cheek:
In her lip such moving blisses,
As from all may challenge kisses;
Round about her neck (outvying
Parian stone) the Graces flying;
And o'er all her limbs at last
A loose purple mantle cast;
But so ordered that the eye
Some part naked may descry,
An essay by which the rest
That lies hidden, may be guess'd.
So, to life th' hast come so near,
All of her, but voice, is here.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

SPRING

See the Spring herself discloses,
And the Graces gather roses;
See how the becalmed seas
Now their swelling waves appease;
How the duck swims, how the crane
Comes from winter home again;
See how Titan's cheerful ray
Chaseth the dark clouds away;
Now in their new robes of green
Are the plowman's labors seen:
Now the lusty teeming Earth
Springs each hour with a new birth;
Now the olive blooms: the vine
Now doth with plump pendants shine;
And with leaves and blossoms now
Freshly bourgeons every bough.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

YOUTHFUL AGE

Young men dancing, and the old
Sporting I with joy behold;
But an old man gay and free
Dancing most I love to see;
Age and youth alike he shares,
For his heart belies his hairs.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

THE WISH

Niobe on Phrygian sands
Turn'd a weeping statue stands,
And the Pandionian Maid
In a swallow's wings array'd;
But a mirror I would be,
To be look'd on still by thee;
Or the gown wherein thou'rt drest,
That I might thy limbs invest;
Or a crystal spring, wherein
Thou might'st bathe thy purer skin;
Or sweet unguents, to anoint
And make supple every joint;
Or a knot, thy breast to deck;
Or a chain, to clasp thy neck;
Or thy shoe I wish to be,
That thou might'st but tread on me.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

ANACREON'S DOVE

"Lovely courier of the sky,
Whence and whither dost thou fly?
Scattering, as thy pinions play,
Liquid fragrance all the way.
Is it business? Is it love?
Tell me, tell me, gentle Dove."—
"Soft Anacreon's vows I bear,
Vows to Myrtale the fair;

Graced with all that charms the heart,
Blushing nature, smiling art,
Venus, courted by an ode,
On the Bard her Dove beſtow'd.
Veſted with a maſter's right,
Now Anacreon rules my flight:
As the letters that you see,
Weighty charge consign'd to me:
Think not yet my service hard,
Joyless task without reward:
Smiling at my maſter's gates,
Freedom my return awaits:
But the liberal grant in vain
Tempts me to be wild again.
Can a prudent Dove decline
Blissful bondage such as mine?
Over hills and fields to roam,
Fortune's gueſt without a home;
Under leaves to hide one's head,
Slightly shelter'd, coarsely fed;
Now my better lot beſtows
Sweet repaſt, and soft repose;
Now the generous bowl I sip
As it leaves Anacreon's lip;
Void of care, and free from dread
From his fingers snatch his bread,
Then with luscious plenty gay
Round his chambers dance and play;
Or, from wine as courage springs,
O'er his face expand my wings;
And, when feaſt and frolic tire,
Drop asleep upon his lyre.
This is all; be quick and go,
More than all thou can'ſt not know;
Let me now my pinions ply,—
I have chatter'd like a pye."

(*Samuel Johnson*)

Simonides of Ceos

480 B.C.

THERMOPYLÆ

Go tell the Spartans, thou that passeth by,
That here, obedient to their laws, we lie.

(*William Lisle Bowles*)

Bacchylides

450 B.C.

PEACE ON EARTH

To mortal men Peace giveth these good things:
Wealth, and the flowers of honey-throated song;
  The flame that springs
On craven altars from fat sheep and kine,
Slain to the gods in heaven; and, all day long,
Games for glad youths, and flutes, and wreaths, and circling wine.
Then in the steely shield swart spiders weave
  Their web and dusky woof:
Rust to the pointed spear and sword doth cleave;
  The brazen trump sounds no alarms;
Nor is sleep harried from our eyes aloof,
But with sweet rest my bosom warms:
The streets are thronged with lovely men and young,
And hymns in praise of boys like flames to heaven are flung.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Æschylus

525–456 B.C

Nothing could equal the sublime emotion with which the Trilogy inspired me, and to the last words of the *Eumenides* I lived in an atmosphere so far removed from the present day that I have never since been really able to reconcile myself with modern literature.—RICHARD WAGNER.

CHORUS FROM AGAMEMNON

GREAT Fortune is an hungry thing,
  And filleth no heart anywhere,

Though men with fingers menacing
  Point at the great house, none will dare,
When Fortune knocks, to bar the door
Proclaiming: "Come thou here no more!"
Lo, to this man the Gods have given
  Great Ilion in the dust to tread
And home return, emblazed of heaven;
If it is writ, he too shall go
Through blood for blood spilt long ago;
If he too, dying for the dead,
  Should crown the deaths of alien years,
  What mortal afar off, who hears,
Shall boast him Fortune's Child, and led
  Above the eternal tide of tears?

(*Sir Gilbert Murray*)

CHORUS FROM THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

Lament for the Two Brothers Slain by Each Other's Hand

Now do our eyes behold
The tidings which were told:
Twin fallen kings, twin perished hopes to mourn,
The slayer, the slain,
The entangled doom forlorn
And ruinous end of twain.
Say, is not sorrow, is not sorrow's sum
On home and hearthstone come?
Oh, waft with sighs the sail from shore,
Oh, smite the bosom, cadencing the oar
That rows beyond the rueful stream for aye
To the far strand,
The ship of souls, the dark,
The unreturning bark
Whereon light never falls nor foot of Day,
Even to the bourne of all, to the unbeholden land.

(*A. E. Housman*)

Sophocles

495–406 B.C.

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

CHORUS FROM ŒDIPUS COLONEUS

WHAT man is he that yearneth
  For length unmeasured of days?
Folly mine eye discerneth
  Encompassing all his ways.
For years over-running the measure
  Small change thee in evil wise:
Grief draweth nigh thee; and pleasure,
  Behold it is hid from thine eyes.
  This to their wage have they
  Which overlive their day.
And He that looseth from labor
  Doth one with other befriend,
  Whom bride nor bridesmen attend,
Song, nor sound of the tabor,
  Death, that maketh an end.

Thy portion esteem I highest,
  Who wast not ever begot;
Thine next, being born who diest
  And straightway again art not.
With follies light as the feather
  Doth Youth to man befall;
Then evils gather together,
  There wants not one of them all—
  Wrath, envy, discord, strife,
  The sword that seeketh life.
And sealing the sum of trouble
  Doth tottering Age draw nigh,
  Whom friends and kinsfolk fly,
Age, upon whom redouble
  All sorrows under the sky.

This man, as me, even so,
Have the evil days overtaken;
And like as a cape sea-shaken
With tempest at earth's last verges
And shock of all winds that blow,
His head the seas of woe,
The thunders of awful surges
Ruining overflow;
Blown from the fall of eve,
Blown from the dayspring forth,
Blown from the noon in heaven,
Blown from night and the North.

(*A. E. Housman*)

CHORUS FROM AJAX

Fair Salamis, the billow's roar
Wanders around thee yet;
And sailors gaze upon thy shore
Firm in the Ocean set.
Thy son is in a foreign clime
Where Ida feeds her countless flocks,
Far from thy dear remembered rocks,
Worn by the waste of time,—
Comfortless, nameless, hopeless,—save
In the dark prospect of the yawning grave.
And Ajax, in his deep distress
Allied to our disgrace,
Hath cherished in his loneliness
The bosom friend's embrace.
Frenzy hath seized thy dearest son,
Who from thy shores in glory came
The first in valor and in fame;
The deeds that he hath done
Seem hostile all to hostile eyes;
The sons of Atreus see them and despise.

Woe to the mother, in her close of day,
Woe to her desolate heart, and temples gray,
When she shall hear

Her loved one's story whispered in her ear!
"Woe, woe!" will be the cry,—
No quiet murmur like the tremulous wail
Of the lone bird, the querulous nightingale,—
But shrieks that fly
Piercing, and wild, and loud, shall mourn the tale;
And she will beat her breast, and rend her hair,
Scattering the silver locks that Time hath left her there.

Oh! when the pride of Græcia's noblest race
Wanders, as now, in darkness and disgrace,
When Reason's day
Sets rayless—joyless—quenched in cold decay,
Better to die, and sleep
The never-waking sleep, than linger on,
And dare to live, when the soul's life is gone:
But thou shalt weep,
Thou wretched father, for thy dearest son,
Thy best beloved, by inward Furies torn,
The deepest, bitterest curse thine ancient house hath borne!

(*Winthrop Mackworth Praed*)

Euripides

480–406 B.C.

Sad Electra's poet—MILTON.

CHORUS FROM ALCESTIS

THE STRENGTH OF FATE

IN heaven-high musings and many,
Far-seeking and deep debate,
Of strong things find I not any
That is as the strength of Fate.
Help nor healing is told
In soothsayings uttered of old,
In the Thracian runes, the verses
Engraven of Orpheus' pen;

No balm of virtue to save
Apollo aforetime gave,
Who stayeth with tender mercies
    The plagues of the children of men.

She hath not her habitation
    In temples that hands have wrought;
Him that bringeth oblation,
    Behold, she heedeth him naught.
Be thou not wroth with us more,
O mistress, than heretofore;
For what God willeth soever,
    That thou bringest to be;
Thou breakest in sunder the brand
Far forged in the Iron Land;
Thine heart is cruel, and never
    Came pity anigh unto thee.

Thee, too, O King, hath she taken
    And bound in her tenfold chain;
    Yet faint not, neither complain:
The dead thou wilt not awaken
    For all thy weeping again.
    They perish, whom gods begot;
    The night releaseth them not.
    Beloved was she that died
    And dear shall ever abide,
For this was the queen among women, Admetus,
    that lay by thy side.

    Not as the multitude lowly
        Asleep in their sepulchres,
        Not as their grave be hers,
    But like as the gods held holy,
        The worship of wayfarers.
    Yea, all that travel the way
    Far off shall see it and say,

Lo, erst for her lord she died,
To-day she sitteth enskied;
Hail, lady, be gracious to usward; that alway her honor abide.

(*A. E. Housman*)

CHORUSES FROM THE CYCLOPS

Love Song

One with eyes the fairest
  Cometh from his dwelling,
Some one loves thee, rarest,
  Bright beyond my telling.
In thy grace thou shinest
Like some nymph divinest,
In her caverns dewy:—
All delights pursue thee,
Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,
Shall thy head be wreathing.

Chorus of Satyrs, Driving Their Goats

Where has he of race divine
  Wandered in the winding rocks?
Here the air is calm and fine
  For the father of the flocks;
Here the grass is soft and sweet,
And the river-eddies meet
In the trough beside the cave,
Bright as in their fountain wave.
Neither here, nor on the dew
  Of the lawny uplands feeding?
Oh, you come!—a stone at you
  Will I throw to mend your breeding;
Get along, you hornèd thing,
Wild, seditious, rambling!
An Iacchic melody
  To the golden Aphrodite

Will I lift, as erst did I
  Seeking her and her delight
With the Mænads, whose white feet
To the music glance and fleet.
Bacchus, O belovèd, where
Shaking wide thy yellow hair,
Wanderest thou alone, afar?
  To the one-eyed Cyclops we,
Who by right thy servants are,
  Minister in misery,
In these wretched goat-skins clad,
  Far from thy delights and thee.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

CHORUS FROM HIPPOLYTUS

O For the Wings of a Dove

Could I take me to some cavern for mine hiding,
  In the hilltops where the Sun scarce hath trod;
Or a cloud make the home of mine abiding,
  As a bird among the bird-droves of God.
Could I wing me to my rest amid the roar
Of the deep Adriatic on the shore
Where the water of Eridanus is clear,
  And Phaeton's sad sisters by his grave
  Weep into the river, and each tear
  Gleams a drop of amber, in the wave.

To the strand of the Daughters of the Sunset,
  The Apple-tree, the singing and the gold;
Where the mariner must stay him from his onset,
  And the red wave is tranquil as of old;
    Yea, beyond that pillar of the End
    That Atlas guardeth, would I wend;
Where a voice of living waters never ceaseth
  In God's quiet garden by the sea,
And Earth, the ancient life-giver, increaseth
  Joy among the meadows, like a tree.

(*Sir Gilbert Murray*)

Aristophanes

444–380 B.C.

The half divine humorist in whose incomparable genius the highest qualities of Rabelais were fused and harmonized with the supremest gifts of Shelley.—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

CHORUS OF BIRDS

COME on then, ye dwellers by Nature in darkness, and like to the leaves' generations,
That are little of might, that are molded of mire, unenduring and shadow-like nations,
Poor plumeless ephemerals, comfortless mortals, as visions of shadows fast fleeing
Lift up your mind unto us that are deathless, and dateless the date of our being;
Us, children of heaven; us, ageless for aye; us, all of whose thoughts are eternal:
That ye may from henceforth, having heard of us all things aright as to matters supernal,
Of the being of birds and beginning of Gods and of streams and the dark beyond reaching,
Trustfully knowing aright, in my name bid Prodicos pack with his preaching,
It was Chaos, and Night at the first, and the blackness of darkness, and Hell's broad border,
Earth was not, not air, neither heaven; when in depths of the womb of the dark without order
First thing, first born of the black-plumed Night, was a wind-egg hatcht in her bosom,
Whence timely with seasons revolving again sweet Love burst out as a blossom,
Gold wings glittering forth of his back, like whirlwinds gustily turning.
He, after his wedlock with Chaos, whose wings are of darkness, in Hell broad burning,
For his nestlings begat him the race of us first and upraised us to light new-lighted.

And before this was not the race of the Gods, until all things by Love were united:
And of kind united in kind with communion of Nature the sky and the sea are
Brought forth and the earth and the race of the Gods everlasting and blest. So that we are
Far away the most ancient of all things blest! And that we are of Love's generation
There are manifest manifold signs. We have wings and with us have the Loves habitation;
And manifold fair young folk that forswore love once, ere the bloom of them ended
Have the men pursued that pursued and desired them subdued by the help of us only befriended,
With such bait as a quail, a flamingo, a goose, or a cock's comb staring and splendid.
All best good things that befall men come from us birds, as is plain to all reason:
For first we proclaim and make known to them Spring and the Winter and Autumn in season;
Bid sow, when the crane starts clanging for Afric in shrill-voiced emigrant number
And calls to the pilot to hang up his rudder again for the season and slumber;
And then weave a cloak for Orestes the thief, lest he strip men of theirs if it freezes.
And again thereafter the kite reappearing announces a change in the breezes.
And that here is the season for shearing your sheep of their spring wool. Then does the swallow
Give you notice to sell your greatcoat and provide something light for the heat that's to follow.
Thus are we as Ammon or Delphoi unto you, Dodona, nay Phoibos Apollo!
For, as first ye come all to get auguries of birds, even such is in all things your carriage,
Be the matter a matter of trade, or of earning your bread, or of any one's marriage.

And all things ye lay to the charge of a bird that belongs
to discerning prediction.
Winged fame is a bird, as you reckon; you sneeze and
the sign's as a bird for conviction.
All tokens are *birds* with you—sounds, too, and lackeys
and donkeys. Then must it not follow
That we are to you all as the manifest Godhead that
speaks in prophetic Apollo?

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne*)

Theocritus

3rd century B.C.

That which distinguishes Theocritus from all other poets, both Greek and Latin, and which raises him even above Virgil in his Eclogues, is the inimitable tenderness of his passions, and the natural expression of them in words so becoming of a pastoral. A simplicity shines through all he writes: he shows his art and learning by disguising both.—JOHN DRYDEN.

IDYLL I

THE DEATH OF DAPHNIS

THYRSIS

SWEET are the whispers of yon pine that makes
Low music o'er the spring, and, Goatherd, sweet
Thy piping; second thou to Pan alone.
Is his the horned ram? then thine the goat.
Is his the goat? to thee shall fall the kid;
And toothsome is the flesh of unmilked kids.

GOATHERD

SHEPHERD, thy lay is as the noise of streams
Falling and falling aye from yon tall crag.
If for their meed the Muses claim the ewe,
Be thine the stall-fed lamb; or if they choose
The lamb, take thou the scarce less-valued ewe.

THYRSIS

PRAY by the Nymphs, pray, Goatherd, seat thee here
Against this hill-slope in the tamarisk shade,
And pipe me somewhat, while I guard thy goats.

Goatherd

I durst not, Shepherd, O I durst not pipe
At noontide; fearing Pan, who at that hour
Rests from the toils of hunting. Harsh is he;
Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel.
But, Thyrsis, thou canst sing of Daphnis' woes;
High is thy name for woodland minstrelsy:
Then rest we in the shadow of the elm
Fronting Priapus and the Fountain-nymphs.
There, where the oaks are and the Shepherd's seat,
Sing as thou sang'st erewhile, when matched with him
Of Libya, Chromis; and I'll give thee, first,
To milk, ay thrice, a goat—she suckles twins;
Yet ne'ertheless can fill two milkpails full;—
Next, a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,
Two-handled, newly-carven, smacking yet
O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs
About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays
Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts
Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears
A damsel ('tis a miracle of art)
In robe and snood: and suitors at her side
With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,
Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.
She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now
Her chance regards on that: they, all for love
Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labor lost.
Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands
On the rough rocks: thereto the old man with pains
Drags his great casting-net, as one that toils
Full stoutly: every fiber of his frame
Seems fishing: so about the gray-beard's neck
(In might a youngster yet) the sinews swell.
Hard by the wave-beat sire a vineyard bends
Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes;
A boy sits on the rude fence watching them.
Near him two foxes: down the rows of grapes
One ranging steals the ripest; one assails

With wiles the poor lad's scrip, to leave him soon
Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile
With ears of corn a right fine cricket-trap,
And fits it on a rush: for vines, for scrip,
Little he cares, enamored of his toy.
The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,
Triumph of Æolian art, a wondrous sight.
It was a ferryman's of Calydon:
A goat it coſt me, and a great white cheese.
Ne'er yet my lips came near it, virgin ſtill
It ſtands. And welcome to such boon art thou,
If for my sake thou'lt sing that lay of lays.
I jeſt not: lad, sing: no songs thou'lt own
In the dim land where all things are forgot.

Thyrsis

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
The voice of Thyrsis. Ætna's Thyrsis I.
Where were ye, Nymphs, oh where, while Daphnis pined?
In fair Peneus' or in Pindus' glens?
For great Anapus' ſtream was not your haunt,
Nor Ætna's cliff, nor Acis' sacred rill.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
O'er him the wolves, the jackals howled o'er him;
The lion in the oak-copse mourned his death.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
The kine and oxen ſtood around his feet,
The heifers and the calves wailed all for him.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Firſt from the mountain Hermes came, and said,
"Daphnis, who frets thee? Lad, whom lov'st thou so?"
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Came herdsmen, shepherds came, and goatherds came;
All asked what ailed the lad. Priapus came
And said, "Why pine, poor Daphnis? while the maid
Foots it round every pool and every grove,
(*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song*)

"O lack-love and perverse, in quest of thee;
Herdsman in name, but goatherd rightlier called.
With eyes that yearn the goatherd marks his kids
Run riot, for he fain would frisk as they:
(*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song*):
"With eyes that yearn dost thou too mark the laugh
Of maidens, for thou may'st not share their glee."
Still naught the herdsman said: he drained alone
His bitter portion, till the fatal end.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Came Aphrodite, smiles on her sweet face,
False smiles, for heavy was her heart, and spake:
"So, Daphnis, thou must try a fall with Love!
But stalwart Love hath won the fall of thee."
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Then "Ruthless Aphrodite," Daphnis said,
"Accursed Aphrodite, foe to man!
Say'st thou mine hour is come, my sun hath set?
Dead as alive, shall Daphnis work Love woe."
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
"Fly to Mount Ida, where the swain (men say)
And Aphrodite—to Anchises fly:
There are oak-forests; here but galingale,
And bees that make a music round the hives.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
"Adonis owed his bloom to tending flocks
And smiting hares, and bringing wild beasts down.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
"Face once more Diomed: tell him 'I have slain
The herdsman Daphnis! now I challenge thee.'
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
"Farewell, wolf, jackal, mountain-prisoned bear!
Ye'll see no more by grove or glade or glen
Your herdsman Daphnis! Arethuse, farewell,
And the bright streams that pour down Thymbris' side.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
"I am that Daphnis, who lead here my kine,
Bring here to drink my oxen and my calves.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

"Pan, Pan, oh whether great Lyceum's crags
Thou haunt'st to-day, or mightier Mænalus,
Come to the Sicel isle! Abandon now
Rhium and Helice, and the mountain-cairn
(That e'en gods cherish) of Lycaon's son!
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.
"Come, king of song, o'er this my pipe, compact
With wax and honey-breathing, arch thy lip:
For surely I am torn from life by Love.
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.
"From thicket now and thorn let violets spring,
Now let white lilies drape the juniper,
And pines grow figs, and nature all go wrong:
For Daphnis dies. Let deer pursue the hounds,
And mountain-owls outsing the nightingale.
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song."

So spake he, and he never spoke again.
Fain Aphrodite would have raised his head;
But all his thread was spun. So down the stream
Went Daphnis: closed the waters o'er a head
Dear to the Nine, of nymphs not unbeloved.
Now give me goat and cup; that I may milk
The one, and pour the other to the Muse.
Fare ye well, Muses, o'er and o'er farewell!
I'll sing strains lovelier yet in days to be.

GOATHERD

Thyrsis, let honey and the honeycomb
Fill thy sweet mouth, and figs of Ægilus:
For ne'er cicala trilled so sweet a song.
Here is the cup; mark, friend, how sweet it smells:
The Hours, thou'lt say, have washed it in their well.
Hither, Cissætha! Thou, go milk her! Kids,
Be steady, or your pranks will rouse the ram.

(*Charles Stuart Calverley*)

Idyll II

THE INCANTATION

Where are the bay-leaves, Theſtylis, and the charms?
Fetch all; with fiery wood the caldron crown;
Let glamour win me back my false lord's heart!
Twelve days the wretch hath not come nigh to me,
Nor made enquiry if I die or live,
Nor clamored (oh unkindness!) at my door.
Sure his swift fancy wanders otherwhere,
The slave of Aphrodite and of Love.
I'm off to Timagetus' wreſtling-school
At dawn, that I may see him and denounce
His doings; but I'll charm him now with charms.
So shine out fair, O moon! To thee I sing
My soft low song: to thee and Hecate
The dweller in the shades, at whose approach
E'en the dogs quake, as on she moves through blood
And darkness and the barrows of the slain.
All hail, dread Hecate: companion me
Unto the end, and work me witcheries
Potent as Circe or Medea wrought,
Or Perimede of the golden hair!
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Firſt we ignite the grain. Nay, pile it on:
Where are thy wits flown, timorous Theſtylis?
Shall I be flouted, I, by such as thou?
Pile, and ſtill say, "This pile is of his bones."
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Delphis racks me: I burn him in these bays,
As, flame-enkindled, they lift up their voice,
Blaze once, and not a trace is left behind:
So waſte his flesh to powder in yon fire!
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
E'en as I melt, not uninspired, the wax,
May Mindian Delphis melt this hour with love:
And, swiftly as this brazen wheel whirls round,
May Aphrodite whirl him to my door.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.

Next burn the husks. Hell's adamantine floor
And aught that else stands firm can Artemis move.
Thestylis, the hounds bay up and down the town:
The goddess stands i' the crossroads: sound the gongs.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Hushed are the voices of the winds and seas;
But O not hushed the voice of my despair.
He burns my being up, who left me here
No wife, no maiden, in my misery.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Thrice I pour out; speak thrice, sweet mistress, thus:
"What face soe'er hangs o'er him be forgot
Clean as, in Dia, Theseus (legends say)
Forgat his Ariadne's locks of love."
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
The coltsfoot grows in Arcady, the weed
That drives the mountain-colts and swift mares wild.
Like them may Delphis rave: so, maniac-wise,
Race from his burnished brethren home to me.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
He lost this tassel from his robe; which I
Shred thus, and cast it on the raging flames.
Ah baleful Love! why, like the marsh-born leech,
Cling to my flesh, and drain my dark veins dry?
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
From a crushed eft to-morrow he shall drink
Death! But now, Thestylis, take these herbs and smear
That threshold o'er, whereto at heart I cling
Still, still—albeit he thinks scorn of me—
And spit, and say, " 'Tis Delphis' bones I smear."
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Now all alone, I'll weep a love whence sprung,
When born? Who wrought my sorrow? Anaxo came,
Her basket in her hand, to Artemis' grove.
Bound for the festival, troops of forest beasts
Stood round, and in the midst a lioness.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
Theucharidas' slave, my Thracian nurse now dead,
Then my dear neighbor, prayed me and implored

To see the pageant: I, the poor doomed thing,
Went with her, trailing a fine silken train,
And gathering round me Clearista's robe.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
Now, the mid-highway reached by Lycon's farm,
Delphis and Eudamippus passed me by.
With beards as lustrous as the woodbine's gold
And breasts more sheeny than myself, O Moon,
Fresh from the wrestler's toil they came.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
I saw, I raved, smit (weakling) to my heart.
My beauty withered, and I cared no more
For all the pomp; and how I gained my home
I know not: some strange fever wasted me.
Ten nights and days I lay upon my bed.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
And wan became my flesh, as 't had been dyed,
And all my hair streamed off, and there was left
But bones and skin. Whose threshold crossed I not,
Or missed what grandam's hut who dealt in charms?
For no light thing was this, and time sped on.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
At last I spake the truth to that my maid:
"Seek, an thou canst, some cure for my sore pain.
Alas, I am all the Mindian's! But begone,
And watch by Timegetus' wrestling-school:
There doth he haunt, there soothly take his rest.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Find him alone: not softly: say, 'she waits';
And bring him." So I spake: she went her way,
And brought the lustrous-limbed one to my roof.
And I, the instant I beheld him step
Lightfooted o'er the threshold of my door,
(*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love,*)
Became all cold like snow, and from my brow
Brake the damp dewdrops: utterance I had none,
Not e'en such utterance as a babe may make

That babbles to its mother in its dreams;
But all my fair frame stiffened into wax.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
He bent his pitiless eyes on me; looked down,
And sate down on my couch, and sitting, said:
"Thou hast gained on me, Simætha, (e'en as I
Gained once on young Philinus in the race),
Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"For I had come, by Eros I had come,
This night, with comrades twain or maybe more,
The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,
And, wound about my brow with ribands red,
The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Had ye said 'Enter,' well; for 'mid my peers
High is my name for goodliness and speed:
I had kissed that sweet mouth once and gone my way.
But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,
With brand and axe would we have stormed ye then.
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love,
Next to thee, maiden, who didst pluck me out,
A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,
And badst me hither. It is Love that lights
A fire more fierce than his of Lipara;
Bethink thee, Mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Scares, mischief-mad, the maiden from her bower,
The bride from her warm couch." He spake: and I,
A willing listener, sat, my hand in his,
Among the cushions, and his cheek touched mine,
Each hotter than its wont, and we discoursed
In soft low language. Need I prate to thee,
Sweet Moon, of all we said and all we did?
Till yesterday he found no fault with me,
Nor I with him. But lo, to-day there came
Philista's mother—hers who flutes to me—
With her Melampo's; just when up the sky
Gallop the mates that chariot rose-limbed Dawn:

And divers tales she brought me, with the rest
How Delphis loved, she knew not rightly whom:
But this she knew; that of the rich wine aye
He poured "to Love"; and at the last had fled,
To line, she deemed, the fair one's hall with flowers.
Such was my visitor's tale, and it was true:
For thrice, nay four times, daily he would stroll
Hither, leave here full oft his Dorian flask:
Now—'tis a fortnight since I saw his face.
Doth he then treasure something sweet elsewhere?
Am I forgot? I'll charm him now with charms.
But let him try me more, and by the Fates
He'll soon be knocking at the gates of hell.
Spells of such power are in this chest of mine,
Learned, lady, from mine host in Palestine.

Lady, farewell: turn ocean-ward thy steeds:
As I have purposed, so shall I fulfill.
Farewell, thou bright-faced Moon! Ye stars, farewell,
That wait upon the car of noiseless Night.

(*Charles Stuart Calverley*)

Epigram V

A SYLVAN REVEL

What ho! my shepherds, sweet it were
To fill with song this leafy glade.
Bring harp and flute. The gods have made
An hour for music. Daphnis there
Shall give the note with jocund blare
From out his horn. The rest will aid
With fifes and drums, and charm the shade,
And rout the dusky wings of care.
We'll pipe to fox and wolf and bear,
We'll wake the wood with rataplan,
Fetch every beast from every lair,
Make every creature dance who can,
Set every Satyr's hoof in air,
And tickle both the feet of Pan!

Epigram IX

CLEONICOS

Let sailors watch the waning Pleiades,
And keep the shore. This man, made over-bold
By godless pride, and too much greed of gold,
Setting his gains before his health and ease,
Ran up his sails to catch the whistling breeze:
Whose corpse, ere now, the restless waves have rolled
From deep to deep, while all his freight, unsold,
Is tost upon the tumult of the seas.
Such fate had one whose avaricious eyes
Lured him to peril in a mad emprise.
Yea, from the Syrian coast to Thasos bound,
He slipt his anchor with rich merchandise,
While the wet stars were slipping from the skies,
And with the drowning stars untimely drowned.

Epigram XVIII

THE MONUMENT OF CLEITA

Here Cleita sleeps. You ask her life and race?
Read on, and learn a simple tale and true.
A nurse she was from the far land of Thrace,
Who tended little Medëos while he grew
A healthy, happy child, and did imbue
His nascent mind with godliness and grace;
So fencing him from evil that he knew
No word of what is impious or base.
And when at length, her tale of years all told,
She came to lie in this reposeful spot,
Young Medëos, still a child, but sagely old,
Upreared this monument, that unforgot
The care beyond his recompense of gold
Might live a memory and perish not.

Epigram XXI

THE GRAVE OF HIPPONAX

Here lies a bard, Hippònax—honored name!
Sweet were the songs that won him endless praise,
And yet his life was sweeter than his lays.
Traveler, a question fronts thee: Canst thou claim
Kinship with such in conduct void of blame?
If not, forbear this precinct; go thy ways;
Lest some bright watcher of the tomb should raise
A jealous hand to cover thee with shame.
But if thy soul is free from shade of guilt,
Or, having sinned, hath been at length forgiven
To thee all rights of common kin belong;
Lay down thy weary limbs, and, if thou wilt,
Let slumber wrap them round, nor fear that Heaven
Will suffer any sprite to do thee wrong.

(*Edward Cracroft Lefroy*)

Idyll XI

THE CYCLOPS

And so an easier life our Cyclops drew,
  The ancient Polyphemus, who in youth
Loved Galatea while the manhood grew
  Adown his cheeks, and darkened round his mouth.
No jot he cared for apples, olives, roses;
  Love made him mad; the whole world was neglected,
The very sheep went backward to their closes
  From out the fair green pastures, self-directed.
And singing Galatea, thus, he wore
The sunrise down along the weedy shore,
  And pined alone, and felt the cruel wound
Beneath his heart, which Cypris' arrow bore,
  With a deep pang: but, so, the cure was found;
And, sitting on a lofty rock, he cast
His eyes upon the sea, and sang at last:
"O whitest Galatea, can it be
  That thou shouldst spurn me off who love thee so?

More white than curds, my girl, thou art to see,
More meek than lambs, more full of leaping glee
  Than kids, and brighter than the early glow
On grapes that swell to ripen,—sour like thee!
Thou comest to me with the fragrant sleep,
  And with the fragrant sleep thou goest from me;
Thou fliest . . . fliest as a frightened sheep
  Flies the gray wolf!—yet love did overcome me,
So long!—I loved thee maiden, first of all,
  When down the hills (my mother fast beside thee)
I saw thee stray to pluck the summer-fall
  Of hyacinth-bells, and went myself to guide thee;
And since my eyes have seen thee, they can leave thee
  No more, from that day's light! But thou . . . by Zeus,
Thou wilt not care for *that,* to let it grieve thee!
  I know thee, fair one, why thou springest loose
From my arm round thee. Why? I tell thee, dear!
  One shaggy eyebrow draws its smudging road
Straight through my ample front, from ear to ear;
  One eye rolls underneath; and yawning, broad,
Flat nostrils feel the bulging lips too near.
Yet . . . ho, ho!—*I,*—whatever I appear,—
  Do feed a thousand oxen! When I have done,
I milk the cows, and drink the milk that's best!
  I lack no cheese, while summer keeps the sun;
And after, in the cold, it's ready prest!
  And then, I know to sing, as there is none
Of all the Cyclops can, . . . a song of thee,
Sweet apple of my soul, on love's fair tree,
And of myself who love thee . . . till the West
Forgets the light, and all but I have rest.
I feed for thee, besides, eleven fair does,
  And all in fawn; and four tame whelps of bears.
Come to me, sweet! thou shalt have all of those
  In change for love! I will not halve the shares.
Leave the blue sea, with pure white arms extended
  To the dry shore; and, in my cave's recess,

Thou shalt be gladder for the noon-light ended;
  For here be laurels, spiral cypresses,
Dark ivy, and a vine whose leaves infold
Most luscious grapes; and here is water cold,
  The wooded Ætna pours down thro the trees
From the white snows, which gods were scarce too bold
  To drink in turn with nectar. Who with these
  Would choose the salt wave of the lukewarm seas?
Nay, look on me! If I am hairy and rough,
  I have an oak's heart in me; there's a fire
In these gray ashes which burns hot enough;
  And, when I burn for *thee,* I grudge the pyre
No fuel . . . not my soul, nor this one eye,—
Most precious thing I have, because thereby
I see thee, fairest! Out, alas! I wish
My mother had borne me finnèd like a fish,
That I might plunge down in the ocean near thee,
  And kiss thy glittering hand between the weeds,
If still thy face were turned; and I would bear thee
  Each lily white, and poppy fair that bleeds
Its red heart down its leaves!—one gift, for hours
  Of summer,—one for winter; since to cheer thee,
I could not bring at once all kinds of flowers.
Even now, girl, now, I fain would learn to swim,
If stranger in a ship sailed nigh, I wis
  That I may know how sweet a thing it is
To live down with you in the deep and dim!
Come up, O Galatea, from the ocean,
  And, having come, forget again to go!
As I, who sing out here my heart's emotion,
  Could sit forever. Come up from below.
Come, keep my flocks beside me, milk my kine;
  Come, press my cheese, distrain my whey and curd!
Ah, mother! she alone . . . that mother of mine . . .
  Did wrong me sore! I blame her! Not a word
Of kindly intercession did she address
Thine ear with for my sake; and ne'ertheless
She saw me wasting, wasting, day by day:
  Both head and feet were aching, I will say,

All sick for grief, as I myself was sick.
  O Cyclops, Cyclops! whither hast thou sent
  Thy soul on fluttering wings? If thou wert bent
On turning bowls, or pulling green and thick
  The sprouts to give thy lambkins, thou wouldst make thee
  A wiser Cyclops than for what we take thee.
Milk dry the present! Why pursue too quick
That future which is fugitive aright?
Thy Galatea thou shalt haply find,
Or else a maiden fairer and more kind;
For many girls do call me thro the night,
  And, as they call, do laugh out silvery.
  I, too, am something in the world, I see!"

While thus the Cyclops love and lambs did fold,
Ease came with song, he could not buy with gold.

(*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*)

Bion

3rd century B.C.

IDYLL I

LAMENT FOR ADONIS

(*in part*)

WAIL, wail, Ah for Adonis! He is lost to us, lovely Adonis!
Lost is lovely Adonis! The Loves respond with lamenting.

Nay, no longer in robes of purple recline, Aphrodite:
Wake from thy sleep, sad queen, black-stoled, rain blows on thy bosom;
Cry to the listening world, *He is lost to us, lovely Adonis!*
  Wail, wail, Ah for Adonis! The Loves respond with lamenting.

Lovely Adonis is lying, sore hurt in his thigh, on the mountains,

Hurt in his thigh with the tusk, while grief consumes
Aphrodite:
Slowly he drops toward death, and the black blood
drips from his fair flesh,
Down from his snow-white skin; his eyes wax dull 'neath
the eyelids,
Yea and the rose hath failed his lips, and around them
the kisses

Die and wither, the kisses that Kupris will not re-
linquish:
Still, though he lives no longer, a kiss consoles Aphro-
dite;
But he knows not, Adonis, she kissed him while he was
dying.
Wail, wail, Ah for Adonis! The Loves respond with
lamenting.

Cruel, cruel the wound in the thigh that preys on
Adonis;
But in her heart Cytherea hath yet worse wounds to
afflict her.
Round him his dear hounds bay, they howl in their
grief to the heavens;
Nymphs of the woodlands wail: but she, the Queen
Aphrodite,
Loosing her locks to the air, roams far and wide through
the forest,
Drowned in grief, disheveled, unsandaled, and as she
flies onward,
Briars stab at her feet and cull the blood of the goddess.
She with shrill lamentation thro' glen and thro' glade
is carried,
Calling her Syrian lord, demanding him back, and de-
manding.
But where he lies, dark blood wells up and encircles
the navel;
Blood from the gushing thighs empurples the breast;
and the snow-white

Flank that was once so fair, is now dyed red for Adonis.
Wail, wail, Ah, Cytherea! The Loves respond with lamenting.

She then hath loſt her lord, and with him hath loſt her celestial
Beauty; for fair was he, and fair, while he lived, Aphrodite:
Now in his death her beauty hath died. *Ah, Ah, Cytherea!*
All the mountains lament, and the oaks moan, *Ah for Adonis!*
Streams as they murmur and flow complain of thy griefs, Aphrodite:
Yea and the springs on the hills, in the woods, weep tears for Adonis:
Flowers of the field for woe flush crimson red; and Cythêra,
Through the dells and the glens, shrills loud the dirge of her anguish:
Woe, woe, Ah, Cytherea! He is loſt to us, lovely Adonis!
Echo repeats the groan: *Loſt, loſt, is lovely Adonis!*
Kupris, who but bewailed thy pangs of a love overwhelming?

Lapped in his purple robes is the delicate form of Adonis.
Round him weeping Loves complain and moan in their anguish,
Clipping their locks for Adonis: and one of them treads on his arrows,
One of them breaks his bow, and one sets heel on the quiver;
One hath loosed for Adonis the latchet of sandals, and some bring
Water to pour in an urn; one laves the wound in his white thigh;

One from behind with his wings keeps fanning dainty Adonis.
Wail, wail, Ah for Adonis! The Loves respond with lamenting.

Wail, wail, Ah, Cytherea! The Loves respond with lamenting.
Every torch at the doors hath been quenched by thy hand, Hymenæus;
Every bridal wreath has been torn to shreds and no longer,
Hymen, Hymen no more is the song, but a new song of sorrow,
Woe, woe! and *Ah for Adonis!* resounds in lieu of the bridesong.
This the Graces are shrilling, the son of Cinyras hymning,
Lost is lovely Adonis! in loud antiphonal accents.
Woe, woe! sharply repeat, far more than the praises of Paiôn,
Woe! and *Ah for Adonis!* the Muses who wail for Adonis,
Chaunt their charms to Adonis.—But he lists not to their singing;
Not that he wills not to hear, but the Maiden doth not release him.
Cease from moans, Cytherea, to-day refrain from the death-songs:
Thou must lament him again, and again shed tears in a new year.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Moschus

3rd century B.C.

LAMENT FOR BION

Ye mountain valleys, pitifully groan!
Rivers and Dorian springs, for Bion weep!
Ye plants drop tears; ye groves, lamenting moan!
Exhale your life, wan flowers; your blushes deep

In grief, anemones and roses, steep;
In whimpering murmurs, Hyacinth! prolong
The sad, sad woe thy lettered petals keep;
Our minstrel sings no more his friends among—
Sicilian Muses! now begin the doleful song.

Ye nightingales! that mid thick leaves set loose
The gushing gurgle of your sorrow, tell
The fountains of Sicilian Arethuse
That Bion is no more—with Bion fell
The song—the music of the Dorian shell.
Ye swans of Strymon! now your banks along
Your plaintive throats with melting dirges swell
For him, who sang like you the mournful song;
Discourse of Bion's death the Thracian nymphs among—

The Dorian Orpheus, tell them all, is dead.
His herds the song and darling herdsman miss,
And oaks, beneath whose shade he propt his head;
Oblivion's ditty now he sings for Dis;
The melancholy mountain silent is;
His pining cows no longer wish to feed,
But moan for him; Apollo wept, I wis,
For thee, sweet Bion! and in mourning weed
The brotherhood of Fauns, and all the Satyr breed.

Sicilian Muses! lead the doleful chant;
Not so much near the shore the dolphin moans;
Nor so much wails within her rocky haunt
The nightingale; nor on their mountain thrones
The swallows utter such lugubrious tones;
Nor Cëyx such for faithful Halcyon,
Whose song the blue wave, where he perished, owns;
Nor in the valley, neighbor to the sun,
The funeral birds so wail their Memnon's tomb upon—

As these moan, wail, and weep for Bion dead,
The nightingales and swallows, whom he taught,
For him their elegiac sadness shed;
And all the birds contagious sorrow caught;

The sylvan realm was all with grief distraught.
Who, bold of heart, will play on Bion's reed,
Fresh from his lip, yet with his breathing fraught?
For still among the reeds does Echo feed
On Bion's minstrelsy, Pan only may succeed

To Bion's pipe; to him I make the gift;
But, lest he second seem, e'en Pan may fear
The pipe of Bion to his mouth to lift.
For thee sweet Galatea drops the tear,
And thy dear song regrets, which sitting near
She fondly listed; ever did she flee
The Cyclops and his songs—but ah! more dear
Thy song and sight than her own native sea;
On the deserted sands the nymph without her fee

Me with thy minstrel still as proper heir—
Others thou didst endow with thine estate.
Alas! alas! when in a garden fair
Mallows, crisp dill, and parsley yield to fate,
These with another year regerminate;
But when of mortal life the bloom and crown,
The wise, the good, the valiant, and the great
Succumb to death, in hollow earth shut down,
We sleep, for ever sleep—for ever lie unknown.

(*George Chapman*)

THE OCEAN

When winds that move not its calm surface sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more;
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar
Of Ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
I turn from the drear aspect to the home
Of earth and its deep woods, where intersperst,
When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
Whose prey the wondering fish, an evil lot

Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

"Æsop's Fables"

3rd century ?

THE SHEPHERD-BOY AND THE WOLF

A Shepherd-boy beside a stream
"The Wolf, the Wolf," was wont to scream,
And when the Villagers appeared,
He'd laugh and call them silly-eared.
A Wolf at last came down the steep—
"The Wolf, the Wolf—my legs, my sheep!"
The creature had a jolly feast,
Quite undisturbed, on boy and beast.

For none believes the liar, forsooth,
Even when the liar speaks the truth.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

An Ass put on a Lion's skin and went
About the forest with much merriment,
Scaring the foolish beasts by brooks and rocks,
Till at last he tried to scare the Fox.
But Reynard, hearing from beneath the mane
That raucous voice so petulant and vain,
Remarked, 'O Ass, I too would run away,
But that I know your old familiar bray.'

That's just the way with asses, just the way.

THE SWAN AND THE GOOSE

A rich man bought a Swan and Goose—
That for song, and this for use.
It chanced his simple-minded cook
One night the Swan for Goose mistook.

But in the dark about to chop
The Swan in two above the crop,
He heard the lyric note, and stayed
The action of the fatal blade.

And thus we see a proper tune
Is sometimes very opportune.

(*William Ellery Leonard*)

The Greek Anthology

490 B.C.–1000 A.D.

The Anthology may from some points of view be regarded as the most valuable relic of antique literature which we possess. Composed of several thousand short poems, written at different times and by a multitude of authors, it is coextensive with the whole current of Greek history, from the splendid period of the Persian war to the decadence of Christianized Byzantium. Perhaps, however, the true secret of their charm is this; that in their couplets, after listening to the choric raptures of triumphant public art, we turn aside to hear the private utterances, the harmoniously modulated whispers of a multitude of Greek poets telling us their inmost thoughts and feelings. The unique melodies of Meleager, the chaste and exquisite delicacy of Callimachus, the clear dry style of Straton, Plato's unearthly subtlety of phrase, Antipater's perfect polish, the good sense of Palladas, the fretful sweetness of Agathias, the purity of Simonides, the gravity of Poseidippus, the pointed grace of Philip, the few but mellow tones of Sappho and Erinna, the tenderness of Simmias, the biting wit of Lucillius, the sunny radiance of Theocritus—all these good things are ours in the Anthology. But beyond these perfumes of the poets known to fame is yet another. Over very many of the sweetest and the strongest of the epigrams is written the pathetic word ἀδέσποτον—"without a master." Hail to you, dead poets, unnamed, but dear to the Muses! Surely with Pindar and Anacreon, with Sappho and with Sophocles, the bed of flowers is spread for you in those "black-petalled hollows of Pieria" where you bade Euripides farewell.—John Addington Symonds.

Agathias

NOT SUCH YOUR BURDEN

Not such your burden, happy youths, as ours—
Poor women-children nurtured daintily—

For ye have comrades when ill-fortune lours,
  To hearten you with talk and company;
And ye have games for solace, and may roam
  Along the streets and see the painters' shows.
But woe betide us if we stir from home—
  And there our thoughts are dull enough, God knows!

(*William M. Hardinge*)

PLUTARCH

Chaeronean Plutarch, to thy deathless praise
Does martial Rome this grateful statue raise;
Because both Greece and she thy fame have shared,
(Their heroes written and their lives compared;)
But thou thyself could'st never write thine own;
Their lives have parallels, but thine has none.

(*John Dryden*)

Anonymous

SPIRIT OF PLATO

Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and star-ypaven home
  Floatest thou?
I am the image of swift Plato's spirit,
Ascending heaven—Athens doth inherit
  His corpse below.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

DION OF TARSUS

Dion of Tarsus, here I lie, who sixty years have seen.
I was not ever wed, and would my father had not been!

(*Alma Strettell*)

THE TOMB OF DIOGENES

'Tell me, good dog, whose tomb you guard so well.'
'The Cynic's.' 'True; but who that Cynic tell.'
'Diogenes, of fair Sinope's race.'
'What? He that in a tub was wont to dwell?'
'Yes: but the stars are now his dwelling-place.'

(*John Addington Symonds*)

THE LION OVER THE TOMB OF LEONIDAS

Of beasts am I, of men was he most brave
Whose bones I guard, bestriding this his grave.

(*Walter Leaf*)

Asclepiades

EUMARES

Tumultuous sea, whose wrath and foam are spent
So nigh to Eumares' worn monument;
Spare if thou wilt and shatter if thou must,
For nothing shalt thou find but bones and dust.

(*Richard Garnett*)

Callimachus

HERACLITUS

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of gray ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

(*William Cory*)

TIMON'S EPITAPH

Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:
Pass by, and curse thy fill; but pass and stay not here thy gate.

(*William Shakespeare*)

HIS SON

But twelve short years you lived, my son,
  Just twelve short years, and then you died:
And now your life's brief course is run,
  This grave a father's hopes doth hide.

(*G. B. Grundy*)

Carphyllides

A HAPPY MAN

When these graven lines you see,
Traveler, do not pity me;
Though I be among the dead,
Let no mournful word be said.

Children that I leave behind,
And their children, all were kind;
Near to them and to my wife,
I was happy all my life.

My three sons I married right,
And their sons I rocked at night;
Death nor sorrow ever brought
Cause for one unhappy thought.

Now, and with no need of tears,
Here they leave me, full of years,—
Leave me to my quiet rest
In the region of the blest.

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Glaucus

AN INSCRIPTION BY THE SEA

No dust have I to cover me,
  My grave no man may show;
My tomb is this unending sea,
  And I lie far below.

My fate, O ſtranger, was to drown;
And where it was the ship went down
  Is what the sea-birds know.

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Leonidas of Alexandria

MENODOTIS

Menodotis's portrait here is kept;
  Moſt odd it is
How very like to all the world, except
  Menodotis.

(*Richard Garnett*)

Leonidas of Tarentum

THE SPINNING WOMAN

Morning and evening, sleep she drove away,
  Old Platthis,—warding hunger from the door,
And ſtill to wheel and diſtaff hummed her lay
  Hard by the gates of Eld, and bent and hoar;
Plying her loom until the dawn was gray,
  The long course of Athene did she tread:
With withered hand by withered knee she spun
  Sufficient for the loom of goodly thread,
Till all her work and all her days were done.
  And in her eightieth year she saw the wave
  Of Acheron,—old Platthis,—kind and brave.

(*Andrew Lang*)

THE TOMB OF CRETHON

I am the tomb of Crethon; here you read
His name; himself is number'd with the dead;
Who once had wealth not less than Gyges' gold;
Who once was rich in ſtable, ſtall, and fold;
Who once was bleſt above all living men—
With lands, how narrow now, how ample then!

(*John Hermann Merivale*)

THE LAST JOURNEY

With courage seek the kingdom of the dead;
  The path before you lies,
It is not hard to find, nor tread;
No rocks to climb, no lanes to thread;
But broad, and straight, and even still,
And ever gently slopes down-hill;
You cannot miss it, though you shut your eyes.

(*Charles Merivale*)

Lucianus

ARTIFICIAL BEAUTY

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
  With washes dye your hair,
But paint and washes both are vain
  To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil;
  No labor will efface them;
You wear a mask of smoothest oil,
  Yet still with ease we trace them.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
  Which though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make
  Old Hecuba young Helen.

(*William Cowper*)

Marcus Argentarius

THE OLD STORY

Like many a one, when you had gold
Love met you smiling, we are told;
But now that all your gold is gone,
Love leaves you hungry and alone.

And women, who have called you more
Sweet names than ever were before,
Will ask another now to tell
What man you are and where you dwell.

Was ever anyone but you
So long in learning what is true?
Must you find only at the end
That who has nothing has no friend?

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Meleager

IN THE SPRING

Now the bright crocus flames, and now
  The slim narcissus takes the rain,
And, straying o'er the mountain's brow,
  The daffodillies bud again.
The thousand blossoms wax and wane
  On wold, and heath, and fragrant bough,
  But fairer than the flowers art thou
Than any growth of hill or plain.

Ye gardens cast your leafy crown,
That my love's feet may tread it down,
  Like lilies on the lilies set;
My love, whose lips are softer far
Than drowsy poppy petals are,
  And sweeter than the violet!

(*Andrew Lang*)

SPRING

Now Winter's winds are banished from the sky,
Gay laughs the blushing face of flowery Spring:
Now lays the land her duskier raiment by
And dons her grass-green vest, for signal why
Young plants may choose themselves appareling.

Now drinking tender dews of generous morn,
The meadows break into their summer smile,
The rose unfolds her leaves: and glad, the while,
In far-off hills the shepherd winds his horn,
And his white brede the goatherd's heart beguile.

Now sail the sailors over billowing seas
While careless Zephyr fills the canvas fair,
And singing crowds with dances debonair
Praise Dionysus for the grapes' increase—
The berried ivy twisted in their hair.

Forth from the rotting hide now bees are come—
Deft craftsmen working well and warily—
And in the hive they settle, while they ply
Fresh-flowing waxen store, with busy hum,
And small pierced cells for their sweet industry.

Now shrilleth clear each several bird his note,
The Halcyon charms the wave that knows no gale,
About our eaves the swallow tells her tale,
Along the river banks the swan, afloat,
And down the woodland glades the nightingale.

Now tendrils curl and earth bursts forth anew—
Now shepherd's pipe and fleecy flocks are gay—
Now sailors sail, and Bacchus gets his due—
Now wild birds chirp and bees their toil pursue—
Sing, poet, thou—and sing thy best for May!

(*William M. Hardinge*)

A GARLAND FOR HELIODORA

I'LL frame, my Heliodora! a garland for thy hair,
Which thou, in all thy beauty's pride, mayst not disdain to wear;
For I with tender myrtles white violets will twine,
White violets, but not so pure as that pure breast of thine;

With laughing lilies I will twine narcissus, and the sweet
Crocus shall, in its yellow hue, with purple hyacinth meet.
And I will twine with all the rest, and all the rest above,
Queen of them all, the red red rose, the flower which lovers love.

(*Christopher North*)

Nicarchus

THE RAVEN

The gloom of death is on the raven's wing,
The song of death is in the raven's cries:
But when Demophilus begins to sing,
The raven dies.

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Nicias

THE FOUNTAIN AT THE TOMB

Stay weary traveler, stay!
Beneath these boughs repose;
A step out of the way
My little fountain flows.
And never quite forget
The monumental urn,
Which Simus here hath set
His buried child to mourn.

(*Charles Merivale*)

Palladas

VANITY OF VANITIES

Naked to earth was I brought—naked to earth I descend.
Why should I labor for naught, seeing how naked the end?

(*William M. Hardinge*)

Paulus Silentiarius

NO MATTER

My name, my country, what are they to thee?
What, whether proud or base my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed all other men;
Perhaps I fell below them all. What then?
Suffice it, stranger, that thou seest a tomb.
Thou knowst its use. It hides—no matter whom.

(*William Cowper*)

Plato

MORNING AND EVENING STAR

Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled;
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendor to the dead.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

ON A SEAL

Five oxen, grazing in a flowery mead,
A jasper seal, done to the life, doth hold;
'The little herd away long since had fled,
Were't not enclos'd within a pale of gold.

(*Thomas Stanley*)

FAREWELL

Far from the deep roar of the Ægean main,
Here lie we in the midst of Media's plain.
Farewell, great Fatherland! Farewell to thee,
Eubœa's neighbor, Athens! Farewell, Sea!

(*Charles Whibley*)

Posidippus

DORICHA

So now the very bones of you are gone
Where they were dust and ashes long ago;
And there was the last ribbon you tied on
To bind your hair, and that is dust also;
And somewhere there is dust that was of old
A soft and scented garment that you wore—
The same that once till dawn did closely fold
You in with fair Charaxus, fair no more.

But Sappho, and the white leaves of her song,
Will make your name a word for all to learn,
And all to love thereafter, even while
It's but a name; and this will be as long
As there are distant ships that will return
Again to your Naucratis and the Nile.

(*Edwin Arlington Robinson*)

Rufinus

THE LOVER'S POSY

I SEND a garland to my love
Which with my own hands I wove:
Rose and lily here there be
Twined with cool anemone,
White narcissus, dewy wet,
And the purple violet.
Take and bind it on your brow,
Nor be proud, as you are now.
As the flowers bloom and fade,
So must you too, haughty maid.

(*W. H. D. Rouse*)

LATIN

Titus Lucretius Carus

95–52 B.C.

The distinguishing character of Lucretius (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions. . . . From this sublime and daring genius of his it must of necessity come to pass that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse, where the barrenness of his subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his fancy. . . . He was so much an atheist that he forgot sometimes to be a poet.—JOHN DRYDEN.

NO SINGLE THING ABIDES

Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi
Expugnata dabunt labem putresque ruinas.

I

No single thing abides; but all things flow.
Fragment to fragment clings—the things thus grow
  Until we know and name them. By degrees
They melt, and are no more the things we know.

II

Globed from the atoms falling slow or swift
I see the suns, I see the systems lift
  Their forms; and even the systems and the suns
Shall go back slowly to the eternal drift.

III

Thou too, oh earth—thine empires, lands, and seas—
Least, with thy stars, of all the galaxies,
  Globed from the drift like these, like these thou too
Shalt go. Thou art going, hour by hour, like these.

IV

Nothing abides. Thy seas in delicate haze
Go off; those moonéd sands forsake their place;
  And where they are, shall other seas in turn
Mow with their scythes of whiteness other bays.

V

Lo, how the terraced towers, and monſtrous round
Of league-long ramparts rise from out the ground,
  With gardens in the clouds. Then all is gone,
And Babylon is a memory and a mound.

VI

Observe this dew-drenched rose of Tyrian grain—
A rose to-day. But you will ask in vain
  To-morrow what it is; and yeſterday
It was the duſt, the sunshine and the rain.

VII

This bowl of milk, the pitch on yonder jar,
Are ſtrange and far-bound travelers come from far
  This is a snow-flake that was once a flame—
The flame was once the fragment of a ſtar.

VIII

Round, angular, soft, brittle, dry, cold, warm,
Things *are* their qualities: things *are* their form—
  And these in combination, even as bees,
Not singly but combined, make up the swarm:

IX

And when the qualities like bees on wing,
Having a moment cluſtered, cease to cling,
  As the thing dies without its qualities,
So die the qualities without the thing.

X

Where is the coolness when no cool winds blow?
Where is the music when the lute lies low?
  Are not the redness and the red rose one,
And the snow's whiteness one thing with the snow?

XI

Even so, now mark me, here we reach the goal
Of Science, and in little have the whole—
  Even as the redness and the rose are one,
So with the body one thing is the soul.

XII

For, as our limbs and organs all unite
To make our sum of suffering and delight,
  And without eyes and ears and touch and tongue,
Were no such things as taste and sound and sight.

XIII

So without these we all in vain shall try
To find the thing that gives them unity—
  The thing to which each whispers, "Thou art thou"—
The soul which answers each, "And I am I."

XIV

What! shall the dateless worlds in dust be blown
Back to the unremembered and unknown,
  And this frail Thou—this flame of yesterday—
Burn on, forlorn, immortal, and alone?

XV

Did Nature, in the nurseries of the night
Tend it for this—Nature whose heedless might,
  Casts, like some shipwrecked sailor, the poor babe,
Naked and bleating on the shores of light?

XVI

What is it there? A cry is all it is.
It knows not if its limbs be yours or his.
  Less than that cry the babe was yesterday.
The man to-morrow shall be less than this.

XVII

Tissue by tissue to a soul he grows,
As leaf by leaf the rose becomes the rose.
  Tissue from tissue rots; and, as the Sun
Goes from the bubbles when they burst, he goes.

XVIII

Ah, mark those pearls of Sunrise! Fast and free
Upon the waves they are dancing. Souls shall be
  Things that outlast their bodies, when each spark
Outlasts its wave, each wave outlasts the sea.

XIX

The seeds that once were we take flight and fly,
Winnowed to earth, or whirled along the sky,
  Not lost but disunited. Life lives on.
It is the lives, the lives, the lives, that die.

XX

They go beyond recapture and recall,
Lost in the all-indissoluble All:—
  Gone like the rainbow from the fountain's foam,
Gone like the spindrift shuddering down the squall.

XXI

Flakes of the water, on the waters cease!
Soul of the body, melt and sleep like these.
  Atoms to atoms—weariness to rest—
Ashes to ashes—hopes and fears to peace!

XXII

Oh Science, lift aloud thy voice that stills
The pulse of fear, and through the conscience thrills—
  Thrills through the conscience the news of peace—
How beautiful thy feet are on the hills!

(*W. H. Mallock*)

AGAINST THE FEAR OF DEATH

WHAT has this bugbear Death to frighten man,
If souls can die, as well as bodies can?
For, as before our birth we felt no pain,
When Punic arms infested land and main,
When heaven and earth were in confusion hurl'd
For the debated empire of the world,
Which awed with dreadful expectation lay,
Soon to be slaves, uncertain who should sway:
So, when our mortal frame shall be disjoin'd,
The lifeless lump uncoupled from the mind,
From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;
We shall not feel, because we shall not be.
Though earth in seas, and seas in heaven were lost,
We should not move, we only should be toss'd.
Nay, e'en suppose when we have suffered fate
The soul should feel in her divided state,
What's that to us? for we are only we,
While souls and bodies in our frame agree.
Nay, though our atoms should revolve by chance,
And matter leap into the former dance;
Though time our life and motion could restore,
And make our bodies what they were before,
What gain to us would all this bustle bring?
The new-made man would be another thing.
When once an interrupting pause is made,
That individual being is decay'd.
We, who are dead and gone, shall bear no part
In all the pleasures, nor shall feel the smart,
Which to that other mortal shall accrue,
Whom to our matter time shall mold anew.

For backward if you look on that long space
Of ages past, and view the changing face
Of matter, toss'd and variously combin'd
In sundry shapes, 'tis easy for the mind
From thence to infer, that seeds of things have been
In the same order as they now are seen:
Which yet our dark remembrance cannot trace,
Because a pause of life, a gaping space,
Has come betwixt, where memory lies dead,
And all the wandering motions from the sense are fled.
For whosoe'er shall in misfortunes live,
Must be, when those misfortunes shall arrive;
And since the man who is not, feels not woe,
(For death exempts him, and wards off the blow,
Which we, the living, only feel and bear,)
What is there left for us in death to fear?
When once that pause of life has come between
'Tis just the same as we had never been.

(*John Dryden*)

Caius Valerius Catullus

87–57 B.C.

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago.—
LORD TENNYSON.

MY SWEETEST LESBIA

My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love,
And though the sager sort our deeds reprove,
Let us not weigh them. Heaven's great lamps do dive
Into their west, and straight again revive,
But, soon as once set is our little light,
Then must we sleep one ever-during night.

If all would lead their lives in love like me,
Then bloody swords and armor should not be;
No drum nor trumpet peaceful sleeps should move,
Unless alarm came from the camp of Love:
But fools do live and waste their little light,
And seek with pain their ever-during night.

When timely death my life and fortune ends,
Let not my hearse be vext with mourning friends,
But let all lovers rich in triumph come
And with sweet pastimes grace my happy tomb:
And, Lesbia, close up thou my little light,
And crown with love my ever-during night.

(*Thomas Campion*)

TO CELIA

Kiss me, sweet: the wary lover
Can your favors keep, and cover,
When the common courting jay
All your bounties will betray.
Kiss again! no creature comes;
Kiss, and score up wealthy sums
On my lips, thus hardly sundered,
While you breathe. First give a hundred,
Then a thousand, then another
Hundred, then unto the other
Add a thousand, and so more;
Till you equal with the store
All the grass that Romney yields,
Or the sands in Chelsea fields,
Or the drops in silver Thames,
Or the stars that gild his streams
In the silent summer-nights,
When youths ply their stolen delights;
That the curious may not know
How to tell 'em as they flow,
And the envious when they find
What their number is, be pined.

(*Ben Jonson*)

LESBIA RAILING

Lesbia forever on me rails.
To talk of me she never fails.
Now, hang me, but for all her art,
I find that I have gained her heart.

My proof is this: I plainly see
The case is just the same with me;
I curse her every hour sincerely,
Yet, hang me, but I love her dearly.

(*Jonathan Swift*)

TRUE OR FALSE

None could ever say that she,
Lesbia! was so loved by me.
Never all the world around
Faith so true as mine was found.
If no longer it endures
(Would it did!) the fault is yours.
I can never think again
Well of you: I try in vain.
But . . . be false . . . do what you will.—
Lesbia! I must love you still.

(*Walter Savage Landor*)

SAPPHO

Like to a god he seems to me,
O more than god, if that may be,
The man who, seated next to thee,
  Gazes, and hears

Thy laugh of love that snatched away
My soul and sense: for on the day
I saw thee, lady, voice could say
  Not any word;

But tongue grew stark, and thro my frame
Fed unforeseen a subtle flame,
And rang my ears, and eyes became
  Veiled, as in night.

(*William Ellery Leonard*)

ON THE BURIAL OF HIS BROTHER

By ways remote and distant waters sped,
  Brother, to thy sad graveside am I come,

That I may give the last gifts to the dead,
  And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb;
Since She who now bestows and now denies
  Hath ta'en thee, hapless brother from mine eyes.
But lo! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,
  Are made sad things to grace thy coffin-shell;
Take them, all drenchèd with a brother's tears,
  And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell.

(*Aubrey Beardsley*)

SIRMIO

Gem of all isthmuses and isles that lie,
Fresh or salt water's children, in clear lake
Or ampler ocean: with what joy do I
Approach thee, Sirmio! Oh! am I awake,
Or dream that once again my eye beholds
Thee, and has looked its last on Thynian wolds?
Sweetest of sweets to me that pastime seems,
When the mind drops her burden: when—the pain
Of travel past—our own cot we regain,
And nestle on the pillow of our dreams!
'Tis this one thought that cheers us as we roam.
Hail, O fair Sirmio! Joy, thy lord is here!
Joy too, ye waters of the Garda Mere!
And ring out, all ye laughter-peals of home.

(*Charles Stuart Calverley*)

LOVE AND DEATH

Friend, if the mute and shrouded dead
  Are touched at all by tears,
By love long fled and friendship sped
  And the unreturning years,

O then, to her that early died,
  O doubt not, bridegroom, to thy bride
Thy love is sweet and sweeteneth
  The very bitterness of death.

(*H. W. Garrod*)

THE YACHT

Stranger, the bark you see before you says
That in old times and in her early days
She was a lively vessel that could make
The quickest voyages, and overtake
All her competitors with sail or oar;
And she defies the rude Illyrian shore,
And Rhodes with her proud harbor, and the seas
That intersect the scattered Cyclades,
And the Propontic and the Thracian coast,
(Bold as it is) to contradict her boast.
She calls to witness the dark Euxine sea
And mountains that had known her as a tree,
Before her transformation, when she stood
A native of the deep Cytorian wood,
Where all her ancestors had flourished long,
And, with their old traditionary song,
Had whispered her responses to the breeze.
And waked the chorus of her sister trees.

Amastris, from your haven forth she went,
You witnessed her first outset and descent,
Adventuring on an unknown element.
From thence she bore her master safe and free
From danger and alarm through many a sea;
Nor ever once was known to lag behind,
Foremost on every tack, with every wind.
At last, to this fair inland lake, she says
She came to pass the remnant of her days,
Leaving no debt due to the Deities
For vows preferred in danger on the seas:
Clear of incumbrance, therefore, and all other
Contentious claims, to Castor or his brother
As a free gift and offering she devotes
Herself, as long as she survives and floats.

(John Hookham Frere)

Publius Vergilius Maro

70–19 B.C.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word.—LORD TENNYSON.

ECLOGUE IV

THE MESSIAH

SICILIAN Muse, begin a loftier strain!
Tho' lowly shrubs, and trees that shade the plain,
Delight not all; Sicilian Muse, prepare
To make the vocal woods deserve a consul's care.
The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
Renews its finished course: Saturnian times
Roll round again; and mighty years, begun
From their first orb, in radiant circles run.
The base degenerate iron offspring ends;
A golden progeny from heaven descends.
O chaste Lucina, speed the mother's pains,
And haste the glorious birth! thy own Apollo reigns!
The lovely boy, with his auspicious face,
Shall Pollio's consulship and triumph grace;
Majestic months set out with him to their appointed race.
The father banished virtue shall restore,
And crimes shall threat the guilty world no more.
The son shall lead the life of gods, and be
By gods and heroes seen, and gods and heroes see.
The jarring nations he in peace shall bind,
And with paternal virtues rule mankind.
Unbidden Earth shall wreathing ivy bring,
And fragrant herbs (the promises of spring),
As her first offerings to her infant king.
The goats with strutting dugs shall homeward speed,
And lowing herds secure from lions feed.
His cradle shall with rising flowers be crowned:
The serpent's brood shall die; the sacred ground

Shall weeds and poisonous plants refuse to bear;
Each common bush shall Syrian roses wear.
But when heroic verse his youth shall raise,
And form it to hereditary praise,
Unlabored harvests shall the fields adorn,
And clustered grapes shall blush on every thorn;
The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep,
And thro' the matted grass the liquid gold shall creep.
Yet of old fraud some footsteps shall remain:
The merchant still shall plow the deep for gain;
Great cities shall with walls be compassed round,
And sharpened shares shall vex the fruitful ground;
Another Tiphys shall new seas explore;
Another Argo land the chiefs upon the Iberian shore;
Another Helen other wars create,
And great Achilles urge the Trojan fate.
But when to ripened manhood he shall grow,
The greedy sailor shall the seas forego;
No keel shall cut the waves for foreign ware,
For every soil shall every product bear.
The laboring hind his oxen shall disjoin;
No plow shall hurt the glebe, no pruning hook the vine;
Nor wool shall in dissembled colors shine.
But the luxurious father of the fold,
With native purple, or unborrowed gold,
Beneath his pompous fleece shall proudly sweat;
And under Tyrian robes the lamb shall bleat.
The Fates, when they this happy web have spun,
Shall bless the sacred clew, and bid it smoothly run.
Mature in years, to ready honors move,
O of celestial seed! O foster son of Jove!
See, laboring Nature calls thee to sustain
The nodding frame of heaven, and earth, and main!
See to their base restored, earth, seas, and air;
And joyful ages, from behind, in crowding ranks appear.
To sing thy praise, would Heaven my breath prolong,
Infusing spirits worthy such a song,
Not Thracian Orpheus should transcend my lays,
Nor Linus crowned with never-fading bays;

Tho' each his heavenly parent should inspire;
The Muse instruct the voice, and Phœbus tune the lyre.
Should Pan contend in verse, and thou my theme,
Arcadian judges should their god condemn.
Begin, auspicious boy, to cast about
Thy infant eyes, and, with a smile, thy mother single out:
Thy mother well deserves that short delight,
The nauseous qualms of ten long months and travel to requite.
Then smile: the frowning infant's doom is read;
No god shall crown the board, nor goddess bless the bed.

(*John Dryden*)

Quintus Horatius Flaccus

65–8 B.C.

That which will distinguish his style from all other poets is the elegance of his words, and the numerousness of his verse; there is nothing so delicately turned in the Roman language. There appears in every part of his language a kind of noble and bold purity. There is a secret happiness attends his choice, which in Petronius is called *curiosa felicitas*. But the most distinguishing part of all his character seems to me to be his briskness, his jollity, and his good humor.—JOHN DRYDEN.

TO THALIARCHUS

(ODES, I, 9)

BEHOLD yon mountain's hoary height,
Made higher with new mounts of snow;
Again behold the winter's weight
Oppress the laboring woods below:
And streams with icy fetters bound,
Benumb'd and cramp'd to solid ground.

With well-heap'd logs dissolve the cold,
And feed the genial hearth with fires;
Produce the wine, that makes us bold,
And sprightly wit of love inspires.
For what hereafter shall betide,
God, if 'tis worth his care, provide.

Let him alone, with what he made,
  To toss and turn the world below:
At his command the ſtorms invade;
  The winds by his commission blow;
Till with a nod he bids them cease,
And then the calm returns, and all is peace.

To-morrow and her works defy,
  Lay hold upon the present hour,
And snatch the pleasures passing by,
  To put them out of Fortune's power.
Nor Love, nor Love's delights, disdain;
Whate'er thou gett'ſt to-day is gain.

Secure those golden, early joys,
  That youth, unsour'd by sorrow, bears,
Ere withering Time the taſte deſtroys
  With sickness and unwieldly years.
For active sports, for pleasing reſt,
This is the time to be posseſt;
The beſt is but in season beſt.

The appointed hour of promis'd bliss,
  The pleasing whisper in the dark,
The half-unwilling, willing kiss,
  The laugh that guides thee to the mark,
When the kind nymph would coyness feign,
And hides but to be found again:
These, these are joys, the gods for youth ordain.

(*John Dryden*)

TO MÆCENAS

(Odes, III, 29)

Descended of an ancient line,
  That long the Tuscan scepter sway'd,
Make haſte to meet the generous wine,
  Whose piercing is for thee delay'd:
  The rosy wreath is made;
And artful hands prepare
The fragrant Syrian oil, that shall perfume thy hair.

When the wine sparkles from afar,
  An the well-natur'd friend cries, come away;
Make haſte and leave thy business and thy care,
  No mortal intereſt can be worth thy ſtay.
Leave, for a while, thy coſtly country seat;
And, to be great indeed, forget
The nauseous pleasures of the great.

  Make haſte and come:
Come and forsake thy cloying ſtore;
Thy turret that surveys from high
  The smoke, and wealth, and noise of Rome,
And all the busy pageantry
That wise men scorn, and fools adore.
Come, give thy soul a loose, and taſte the pleasures of the poor.
Sometimes 'tis grateful for the rich to try
A short vicissitude, and fit of poverty:
  A savory dish, a homely treat,
  Where all is plain, where all is neat,
Without the ſtately spacious room,
The Persian carpet, or the Tyrian loom,
  Clear up the cloudy foreheads of the great.

The sun is in the Lion mounted high;
  The Syrian ſtar barks from afar,
And with his sultry breath infects the sky;
The ground below is parch'd, the heavens above us fry.
  The shepherd drives his fainting flock
  Beneath the covert of a rock,
And seeks refreshing rivulets nigh:
The sylvans to their shades retire,
Those very shades and ſtreams new shades and ſtreams require,
And want a cooling breeze of wind to fan the raging fire.
  Thou, what befits the new Lord Mayor;
  And what the city factions dare,
  And what the Gallic arms will do,
  And what the quiver-bearing foe,
  Art anxiously inquisitive to know:

But God has wisely hid from human sight
  The dark decrees of future fate,
And sown their seeds in depths of night.
  He laughs at all the giddy turns of ſtate.
  Where mortals search too soon, and fear too late.

Enjoy the present smiling hour,
And put it out of Fortune's power;
The tide of business, like the running ſtream,
  Is sometimes high and sometimes low,
  A quiet ebb or a tempeſtuous flow,
And always in extreme.

Now with a noiseless gentle course
  It keeps within the middle bed;
  Anon it lifts aloft its head,
And bears down all before it with impetuous force;
  And trunks of trees come rolling down,
  Sheep and their folds together drown:
Both house and homeſtead into seas are borne,
And rocks are from their old foundations torn,
And woods, made thin with winds, their scatter'd honors
      mourn.

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He, who can call to-day his own:
He who secure within, can say,
To-morrow do thy worſt, for I have lived to-day.
Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,
The joys I have possess'd, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself upon the paſt has power,
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

Fortune that with malicious joy
  Does man, her slave, oppress,
Proud of her office to deſtroy,
  Is seldom pleased to bless:
Still various, and inconſtant ſtill,
But with an inclination to be ill,

Promotes, degrades, delights in strife,
And makes a lottery of life.
  I can enjoy her while she is kind;
  But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away;
  The little or the much she gave, is quietly resign'd:
Content with poverty my soul I arm,
And Virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm.

  What is 't to me,
Who never sail in her unfaithful sea,
If storms arise, and clouds grow black;
If the mast split, and threaten wreck?
Then let the greedy merchant fear
  For his ill-gotten gain,
And pray to gods that will not hear
While the debating winds and billows bear
  His wealth unto the main.
For me, secure from Fortune's blows,
Secure of what I cannot lose,
In my small pinnace I can sail,
  Contemning all the blustering roar;
And running with a merry gale,
With friendly stars my safety seek
Within some little winding creek,
  And see the storm ashore.

(*John Dryden*)

THE IMMORTALITY OF VERSE

(Odes, IV, 9)

Lest you should think that verse shall die,
  Which sounds the silver Thames along,
Taught on the wings of truth to fly
  Above the reach of vulgar song;

Though daring Milton sits sublime,
  In Spenser native Muses play;

Nor yet shall Waller yield to time,
  Nor pensive Cowley's mortal lay.

Sages and chiefs long since had birth
  Ere Cæsar was, or Newton named;
These raised new empires o'er the earth,
  And those, new heavens and systems framed.
Vain was the chief's, the sage's pride!
  They had no poet, and they died.
In vain they schemed, in vain they bled!
  They had no poet, and are dead.

(*Alexander Pope*)

TO FUSCUS ARISTUS

(Epistles I, 10)

Health from the lover of the country, me,
Health to the lover of the city, thee.
A difference in our souls this only proves;
In all things else, we pair like married doves.
But the warm nest and crowded dove-house thou
Dost like: I loosely fly from bough to bough,
And rivers drink, and all the shining day
Upon fair trees or mossy rocks I play;
In fine, I live and reign, when I retire
From all that you equal with heaven admire;
Like one at last from the priest's service fled,
Loathing the honied cakes, I long for bread.
Would I a house for happiness erect,
Nature alone should be the architect;
She'd build it more convenient than great,
And doubtless in the country choose her seat:
Is there a place doth better helps supply
Against the wounds of winter's cruelty?
Is there an aid that gentlier does assuage
The mad celestial dog's, or lion's rage?
Is it not there that sleep (and only there)
Nor noise without, nor cares within does fear?

Does art through pipes a purer water bring
Than that which Nature ſtrains into a spring?
Can all your tap'ſtries, or your pictures, show
More beauties than in herbs and flowers do grow?
Fountains and trees our wearied pride do please,
Ev'n in the midſt of gilded palaces;
And in your towns that proſpect gives delight
Which opens round the country to our sight.
Men to the good from which they rashly fly,
Return at laſt; and their wild luxury
Does but in vain with those true joys contend,
Which Nature did to mankind recommend.
The man who changes gold for burnish'd brass,
Or small right gems for larger ones of glass,
Is not at length more certain to be made
Ridiculous, and wretched by the trade,
Than he who sells a solid good to buy
The painted goods of pride and vanity.
If thou be wise, no glorious fortune choose,
Which 'tis but pain to keep, yet grief to lose;
For, when we place ev'n trifles in the heart,
With trifles, too, unwillingly we part.
An humble roof, plain bed, and homely board,
More clear untainted pleasures do afford
Than all the tumult of vain greatness brings
To kings, or to the favorites of kings.
The horned deer by Nature arm'd so well,
Did with the horse in common paſture dwell;
And when they fought, the field it always won;
Till the ambitious horse begg'd help of man,
And took the bridle, and thenceforth did reign
Bravely alone, as lord of all the plain.
But never after could he the rider get
From off his back, or from his mouth the bit.
So they, who poverty too much do fear,
T' avoid that weight, a greater burden bear;
That they might power above their equals have,
To cruel maſters they themselves enslave.
For gold, their liberty exchang'd we see,

That fairest flower which crowns humanity.
And all this mischief does upon them light,
Only, because they know not how, aright,
That great, but secret, happiness to prize,
That's laid up in a little, for the wise:
That is the best and easiest estate
Which to a man sits close, but not too straight;
'Tis like a shoe, it pinches and it burns,
Too narrow; and too large, it overturns.
My dearest friend! stop thy desires at last,
And cheerfully enjoy the wealth thou hast:
And, if me seeking still for more you see,
Chide and reproach, despise and laugh at me.
Money was made, not to command our will,
But all our lawful pleasures to fulfill:
Shame! woe to us, if we our wealth obey:
The horse doth with the horseman run away.

(*Abraham Cowley*)

TO LICINIUS

(Odes, II, 10)

Receive, dear friend, the truths I teach;
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse Fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Embittering all his state,

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;

The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capt eminence divide,
    And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
    And hopes, in spite of pain;
If winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet spring comes dancing forth,
    And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast?
The dark appearance will not last;
    Expect a brighter sky.
The god, that strings the silver bow,
Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
    And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
    And let thy strength be seen;
But oh! if Fortune fill thy sail,
With more than a propitious gale,
    Take half thy canvas in.

(*William Cowper*)

PERSIAN FOPPERIES

(Odes, I, 38)

Boy, I hate their empty shows,
  Persian garlands I detest,
Bring not me the late-blown rose
  Lingering after all the rest:

Plainer myrtle pleases me
  Thus outstretched beneath my vine,
Myrtle more becoming thee,
  Waiting with thy master's wine.

(*William Cowper*)

TO PYRRHA

(Odes, I, 5)

What slender youth, bedew'd with liquid odors,
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
Pyrrha? For whom bind'ſt thou
In wreaths thy golden hair,
Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he
Of faith and changed gods complain, and seas
Rough with black winds, and ſtorms
Unwonted shall admire!
Who now enjoys thee credulous, all gold,
Who, always vacant, always amiable
Hopes thee, of flattering gales
Unmindful. Hapless they
To whom thou untried seem'ſt fair. Me, in my vow'd
Picture, the sacred wall declares to have hung,
My dank and dropping weeds
To the ſtern god of sea.

(John Milton)

TO SALLY

(Odes, I, 22)

The man in righteousness arrayed,
A pure and blameless liver,
Needs not the keen Toledo blade,
Nor venom-freighted quiver.
What though he wind his toilsome way
O'er regions wild and weary—
Through Zara's burning desert ſtray,
Or Asia's jungles dreary:

What though he plow the billowy deep
By lunar light, or solar,
Meet the resiſtless Simoon's sweep,
Or iceberg circumpolar!

In bog or quagmire deep and dank
  His foot shall never settle;
He mounts the summit of Mont Blanc,
  Or Popocatapetl.

On Chimborazo's breathless height
  He treads o'er burning lava;
Or snuffs the Bohan Upas blight,
  The deathful plant of Java.
Through every peril he shall pass,
  By Virtue's shield protected;
And still by Truth's unerring glass
  His path shall be directed.

Else wherefore was it, Thursday last,
  While strolling down the valley,
Defenseless, musing as I passed
  A canzonet to Sally,
A wolf, with mouth-protruding snout,
  Forth from the thicket bounded—
I clapped my hands and raised a shout—
  He heard—and fled—confounded.

Tangier nor Tunis never bred
  An animal more crabbèd;
Nor Fez, dry-nurse of lions, fed
  A monster half so rabid;
Nor Ararat so fierce a beast
  Has seen since days of Noah;
Nor stronger, eager for a feast,
  The fell constrictor boa.

(*John Quincy Adams*)

THE SHIP OF STATE

(Odes, I, 14)

Oh Ship! new billows sweep thee out
Seaward. What wilt thou? Hold the port, be stout
  See'st not thy mast
How rent by stiff Southwestern blast?

Thy side, of rowers how forlorn?
Thine hull, with groaning yards, with rigging torn,
Can ill sustain
The fierce, and ever fiercer main;

Thy gods, no more than sails entire,
From whom yet once thy need might aid require,
Of Pontic Pine,
The first of woodland stocks is thine,

Yet race and name are but as dust.
Not painted sterns give storm-tost seamen trust;
Unless thou dare
To be the sport of storms, beware.

O fold at best a weary weight,
A yearning care and constant strain of late,
O shun the seas
That gird those glittering Cyclades.

(*William Ewart Gladstone*)

EXTREMUM TANAIN

(Odes, III, 10)

Before thy door too long of late,
O Lyce, I bewail my fate;
Not Don's barbarian maids, I trow,
Would treat their luckless lovers so;
Thou,—thou alone art obstinate.
Hast thou nor eyes nor ears, Ingrate!
Hark! how the NORTH WIND shakes thy gate!
Look! how the laurels bend with snow
Before thy doors!
Lay by thy pride,—nor hesitate,
Lest Love and I grow desperate;
If prayers, if gifts for naught must go,
If naught my frozen pallor show,—
Beware! . . . I shall not always wait
Before thy doors!

(*Austin Dobson*)

TO CHLOË

(Odes, I, 23)

You shun me, Chloë, wild and shy,
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother
Through trackless woods. If spring winds sigh
It vainly strives its fears to smother.

Its trembling knees assail each other
When lizards stir the brambles dry;—
You shun me, Chloë, wild and shy,
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

And yet no Libyan lion I,—
No ravening thing to rend another;
Lay by your tears, your tremors dry,
A husband's better than a brother;
Nor shun me, Chloë, wild and shy,
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

(*Austin Dobson*)

TO THE FOUNTAIN OF BANDUSIA

(Odes, III, 13)

O fountain of Bandusia!
Whence crystal waters flow.
With garlands gay and wine I'll pay
The sacrifice I owe;
A sportive kid with budding horns
I have, whose crimson blood
Anon shall dye and sanctify
Thy cool and babbling flood.

O fountain of Bandusia!
The Dog-star's hateful spell
No evil brings into the springs
That from thy bosom well;

Here oxen, wearied by the plow,
  The roving cattle here
Hasten in quest of certain rest,
  And quaff thy gracious cheer.

O fountain of Bandusia!
  Ennobled shalt thou be,
For I shall sing the joys that spring
  Beneath yon ilex-tree.
Yes, fountain of Bandusia,
  Posterity shall know
The cooling brooks that from thy nooks,
  Singing and dancing go.

(*Eugene Field*)

AD LEUCONOEN

(Odes, I, 13)

It is not right for you to know, so do not ask, Leuconoë,
How long a life the gods may give or ever we are gone away;
Try not to read the Final Page, the ending colophonian,
Trust not the gypsy's tea-leaves, nor the prophets Babylonian,
Better to have what is to come enshrouded in obscurity
Than to be certain of the sort and length of our futurity.
Why, even as I monologue on wisdom and longevity
How Time has flown! Spear some of it!
  The longest life is brevity.

(*F. P. Adams*)

AD XANTHIAM PHOCEUM

(Odes, II, 4)

Nay, Xanthias, feel unashamed
  That she you love is but a servant.
Remember, lovers far more famed
  Were just as fervent.

Achilles loved the pretty slave
  Brisëis for her fair complexion;
And to Tecmessa Ajax gave
  His young affection.

Why, Agamemnon at the height
  Of feasting, triumph, and anointment,
Left everything to keep, one night,
  A small appointment.

And are you sure the girl you love—
  This made on whom you have your heart set
Is lowly—that she is not of
  The Roman smart set?

A maiden modest as is she,
  So full of sweetness and forbearance,
Must be all right; her folks must be
  Delightful parents.

Her arms and face I can commend,
  And, as the writer of a poem,
I fain would compliment, old friend,
  The limbs below 'em.

Nay, be not jealous. Stop your fears.
  My tendencies are far from sporty.
Besides, the number of my years
  Is over forty.

(*F. P. Adams*)

INVOCATION

(Odes, I, 21)

Maidens young and virgins tender,
Sing Diana in her splendor;
Boys at play within the hollow,
Sing the flowing-haired Apollo.

(Ye that, moved by love and duty,
Praise Diana's holy beauty,
Shall be granted joys unceasing
And, perhaps, a mate that's pleasing.)

(And if winning words we hit on,
Phœbus may present the Briton,
Persian, Parthian and the rest, with
All the wars and plagues *we're* blessed with.)

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

HOLIDAY

(Odes, III, 28)

What celebration should there be? . . .
  Quick, Lyde, bring a jar!
Against a dull sobriety
  We'll wage a lusty war.

The festive sun is setting low,
  The dusk is almost there;
And yet you scarcely move, as though
  We both had time to spare!

Let's pour the wine and sing in turns
  Of Neptune in his lair,
Of mermaids in the water-ferns,
  And of their sea-green hair.

And you, upon your curving lyre,
  Shall spend a tuneful hour,
Singing Dianas darts of fire
  And her benignant power.

Hymns shall arise to Her who sends
  Fresh laughter and delight,
Until our weary singing ends
  In lullabies to-night.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

Sextus Aurelius Propertius

51–? B.C.

WHEN THOU MUST HOME

When thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
The beauteous spirits do ingirt thee round,
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finished love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masks and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauties' sake:
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me.

(*Thomas Campion*)

REVENGE TO COME

(Elegies, III, 25)

I was a joke at dinners; aye, any would-be wit
Might use me for a target, and I must stomach it.
Five years I could be loyal; but now, you'll often mourn,
Biting your nails for anguish, the faith at last outworn,
Nay, weeping will not touch me—I know that trick of old;
You always weep from ambush, I cannot be cajoled.
I shall depart in tears, but my wrongs will check their flow;
Ours was a team well sorted—you could not leave it so.
So now, my mistress' threshold, where oft my tear-drops fell,
And thou, the door I haunted, I bid ye both farewell.
May age afflict you, Cynthia, with ill-dissembled years,
And may you see the wrinkles your fading beauty fears.

And when your glass flings at you the ruin pictured
there,
Go curse them, every wrinkle, and every whitening hair.
Be you in turn excluded, and suffer proud disdain,
And all you did to others be done to you again.
So fate shall soon avenge me—my page bids you give
ear—
Your beauty waits this ending. Woman, believe—and
fear!

(*Kirby Flower Smith*)

Publius Ovidius Naso

43 B.C.–18 A.D.

As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare.—FRANCIS MERES.

WINTER AT TOMI

(TRISTIA)

THE snow lies deep: nor sun nor melting shower
Serves to abate the winter's icy power.
One fall has scarcely come another's there,
And stays in drifts unmelted all the year.
Fierce and tempestuous is the North-wind's sway;
It levels towers of stone and carries roofs away.

With skins and trousers men keep out the cold;
Naught but their faces can your eyes behold.
Into one mass their hair is frozen tight,
Their beards with hoary rime hang glistening white.
Nor need they jars their liquor to confine,
They do not quaff a cup, they break a bit of wine.

Water is brittle here; you use a spade;
And running streams by frost are solid made.
Even the Danube flows with waves concealed
The dark blue surface into ice congealed.

On foot we go across the unmoving tide
And horses' hoofs ring loud where once their oarsmen
plied.

(*F. A. Wright*)

FROM THE METAMORPHOSES

Magic

Ye elves of hills, brooks, ſtanding lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back, you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose paſtime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,
Weak maſters though ye be, I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's ſtout oak
With his own bolt; the ſtrong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar; graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art.

(*William Shakespeare*)

Baucis and Philemon

Then Lelex rose, an old experienced man,
And thus, with sober gravity, began:
"Heaven's power is infinite: earth, air, and sea,
The manufactur'd mass, the making power obey:
By proof to clear your doubt; in Phrygian ground
Two neighboring trees, with walls encompass'd round,
Stand on a moderate rise, with wonder shown;
One a hard oak, a softer linden one:
I saw the place, and them, by Pittheus sent
To Phrygian realms, my grandsire's government.

Not far from thence is seen a lake, the haunt
Of coots, and of the fishing cormorant:
Here Jove with Hermes came; but in disguise
Of mortal men conceal'd their deities;
One laid aside his thunder, one his rod,
And many toilsome ſteps together trod:
For harbor at a thousand doors they knock'd;
Not one of all the thousand but was lock'd.
At laſt a hospitable house they found,
A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground,
Was thatch'd, with reeds and ſtraw together bound.
There Baucis and Philemon lived, and there
Had lived long married, and a happy pair:
Now old in love, though little was their ſtore,
Inured to want, their poverty they bore,
Nor aim'd at wealth, professing to be poor.
For maſter or for servant here to call
Were all alike, where only two were all.
Command was none, where equal love was paid,
Or rather both commanded, both obey'd.
"From lofty roofs the gods repulsed before,
Now ſtooping, enter'd through the little door:
The man (their hearty welcome firſt express'd)
A common settle drew for either gueſt,
Inviting each his weary limbs to reſt.
But ere they sat, officious Baucis lays
Two cushions ſtuff'd with ſtraw, the seat to raise;
Coarse, but the beſt she had; then rakes the load
Of ashes from the hearth, and spreads abroad
The living coals; and, leſt they should expire,
With leaves and bark she feeds her infant fire.
It smokes; and then with trembling breath she blows,
Till in a cheerful blaze the flames arose.
With brushwood and with chips she ſtrengthens these
And adds at laſt the boughs of rotten trees.
The fire thus form'd, she sets the kettle on
(Like burnish'd gold the little seether shone;)
Next took the coleworts which her husband got
From his own ground (a small, well-water'd spot;)

She ſtripp'd the ſtalks of all their leaves; the beſt
She cull'd, and them with handy care she dress'd.
High o'er the hearth a chine of bacon hung;
Good old Philemon seized it with a prong,
And from the sooty rafter drew it down,
Then cut a slice, but scarce enough for one;
Yet a large portion of a little ſtore,
Which for their sakes alone he wish'd were more.
This in the pot he plunged without delay,
To tame the flesh, and drain the salt away.
The time between, before the fire they sat,
And shorten'd the delay by pleasing chat.
"A beam there was, on which a beechen pail
Hung by the handle, on a driven nail:
This fill'd with water, gently warmed, they set
Before their gueſts; in this they bathed their feet,
And after with clean towels dried their sweat.
This done, the hoſt produced the genial bed,
Sallow the feet, the borders, and the ſtead,
Which with no coſtly coverlet they spread,
But coarse old garments; yet such robes as these
They laid alone at feaſts on holydays.
The good old housewife, tucking up her gown
The table sets; the invited gods lie down.
The trivet-table of a foot was lame,
A blot which prudent Baucis overcame,
Who thruſt beneath the limping leg a sherd;
So was the mended board exactly rear'd:
Then rubb'd it o'er with newly-gather'd mint,
A wholesome herb, that breathed a grateful scent.
Pallas began the feaſt, where firſt was seen
The party-color'd olive, black and green:
Autumnal cornels next in order serv'd,
In lees of wine well pickled and preserved.
A garden salad was the third supply,
Of endive, radishes, and succory:
Then curds and cream, the flower of country fare,
And new-laid eggs, which Baucis' busy care
Turn'd by a gentle fire, and roaſted rare.

All these in earthenware were served to board,
And, next in place, an earthen pitcher ſtored
With liquor of the beſt the cottage could afford.
This was the table's ornament and pride,
With figures wrought: like pages at his side
Stood beechen bowls; and these were shining clean,
Varnish'd with wax without, and lined within.
By this the boiling kettle had prepared,
And to the table sent the smoking lard;
On which with eager appetite they dine,
A sav'ry bit, that serv'd to relish wine;
The wine itself was suiting to the reſt,
Still working in the muſt, and lately press'd.
The second course succeeds like that before,
Plums, apples, nuts; and of their wintry ſtore
Dry figs, and grapes, and wrinkled dates were set
In caniſters, to enlarge the little treat:
All these a milkwhite honey-comb surround,
Which in the midſt a country banquet crown'd:
But the kind hoſts their entertainment grace
With hearty welcome, and an open face:
In all they did, you might discern with ease
A willing mind, and a desire to please.

"Meanwhile the beechen bowls went round, and ſtill,
Though often emptied, were observed to fill:
Fill'd without hands, and, of their own accord,
Ran without feet, and danced about the board.
Devotion seiz'd the pair, to see the feaſt
With wine, and of no common grape, increased;
And up they held their hands, and fell to pray'r,
Excusing, as they could, their country fare.

"One goose they had ('twas all they could allow,)
A wakeful sentry, and on duty now,
Whom to the gods for sacrifice they vow:
Her with malicious zeal the couple view'd;
She ran for life, and limping they pursued:
Full well the fowl perceived their bad intent,
And would not make her maſter's compliment;
But persecuted, to the powers she flies,

And close between the legs of Jove she lies:
He with a gracious ear the suppliant heard,
And saved her life; then what he was declared,
And own'd the god. 'The neighborhood,' said he,
'Shall justly perish for impiety:
You stand alone exempted: but obey
With speed, and follow where we lead the way:
Leave these accursed, and to the mountain's height
Ascend, nor once look backward in your flight.'

"They haste, and what their tardy feet denied,
Their trusty staff (their better leg) supplied.
An arrow's flight they wanted to the top,
And there secure, but spent with travel, stop;
They turn their now no more forbidden eyes;
Lost in a lake the floated level lies:
A watery desert covers all the plains,
Their cot alone, as in an isle, remains.
Wondering, with weeping eyes, while they deplore
Their neighbor's fate, and country now no more;
Their little shed, scarce large enough for two,
Seems, from the ground increased, in height and bulk to grow.
A stately temple shoots within the skies,
The crotches of their cot in columns rise;
The pavement polish'd marble they behold,
The gates with sculpture graced, the spires and tiles of gold.

"Then thus the sire of gods, with looks serene:
'Speak thy desire, thou only just of men;
And thou, O woman, only worthy found
To be with such a man in marriage bound.'

"Awhile they whisper; then, to Jove address'd,
Philemon thus prefers their joint request:
'We crave to serve before your sacred shrine,
And offer at your altar rites divine:
And since not any action of our life
Has been polluted with domestic strife,
We beg one hour of death, that neither she
With widow's tears may live to bury me,

Nor weeping I, with wither'd arms, may bear
My breathless Baucis to the sepulchre.'
The godheads sign their suit. They run their race,
In the same tenor, all the appointed space:
Then, when their hour was come, while they relate
These past adventures at the temple gate,
Old Baucis is by old Philemon seen
Sprouting with sudden leaves of sprightly green:
Old Baucis look'd where old Philemon stood,
And saw his lengthen'd arms a sprouting wood:
New roots their fasten'd feet begin to bind,
Their bodies stiffen in a rising rind:
Then, ere the bark above their shoulders grew,
They give and take at once their last adieu.
'At once farewell, O faithful spouse,' they said;
At once the encroaching rinds their closing lips invade.
E'en yet, an ancient Tyanæan shows
A spreading oak, that near a linden grows;
The neighborhood confirm the prodigy,
Grave men, not vain of tongue, or like to lie.
I saw myself the garlands of their boughs,
And tablets hung for gifts of granted vows;
And offering fresher up, with pious prayer,
'The good,' said I, 'are God's peculiar care,
And such as honor Heaven, shall heavenly honor share.' "

(*John Dryden*)

Phaedrus

1st century

ÆSOP AT PLAY

As Æsop was with boys at play,
And had his nuts as well as they,
A grave Athenian, passing by,
Cast on the sage a scornful eye,
As on a dotard quite bereaved:
Which, when the moralist perceived,
(Rather himself a wit professed
Than the poor subject of a jest)

Into the public way he flung
A bow that he had just unstrung:
"There solve, thou conjurer," he cries,
"The problem, that before thee lies."
The people throng; he racks his brain,
Nor can the thing enjoined explain.
At last he give it up—the seer
Thus then in triumph made it clear:
"As the tough bow exerts its spring,
A constant tension breaks the string;
But if 'tis let at seasons loose,
You may depend upon its use."
  Thus recreative sports and play
Are good upon a holiday,
And with more spirit they'll pursue
The studies which they shall renew.

(*Christopher Smart*)

THE DOG IN THE RIVER

The churl that wants another's fare
Deserves at least to lose his share.
  As through the stream a Dog conveyed
A piece of meat, he spied his shade
In the clear mirror of the flood,
And thinking it was flesh and blood,
Snapped to deprive him of the treat:—
But mark the glutton's self-defeat,
Missed both another's and his own,
Both shade and substance, beef and bone.

(*Christopher Smart*)

Petronius Arbiter

1st century

ENCOURAGEMENT TO EXILE

Leave thine own home, O youth, seek distant shores!
For thee a larger order somewhere shines—
Fear not thy fate! For thee through unknown pines
Under the cold north-wind the Danube pours;

For thee in Egypt the untroubled lands
Wait, and strange men behold the setting sun
Fall down and rise. Greatly be thou as one
Who disembarks, fearless, on alien sands.

(*Howard Mumford Jones*)

Marcus Valerius Martialis

40–104

Not altogether a pleasant period, those evil days of Domitian. But after dwelling in the gloom of Tacitus, after being dazzled by the lightning of Juvenal's rhetoric, it is well for us that we can see that age in the broad sunlight of Martial's genius, that we can use the keen and penetrating yet just and kindly eyes of one who saw it as it really was. As he himself said, "his page has the true relish of human life."—KIRBY FLOWER SMITH.

NON AMO TE

I DO not love thee, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this alone I know full well,
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.

(*Tom Brown*)

PROCRASTINATION

TO-MORROW you will live, you always cry;
In what far country does this morrow lie,
That 'tis so mighty long ere it arrive?
Beyond the Indies does this morrow live?
'Tis so far fetched, this morrow, that I fear
'Twill be both very old and very dear.
To-morrow I will live, the fool does say;
To-day itself's too late: the wise lived yesterday.

(*Abraham Cowley*)

INVITING A FRIEND TO SUPPER

TO-NIGHT, grave sir, both my poor house and I
Do equally desire your company.
Not that we think us worthy such a guest,
But that your worth will dignify our feast,

With those that come; whose grace may make that seem
Something, which else could hope for no esteem.
It is the fair acceptance, sir, creates
The entertainment perfect, not the cates.
Yet shall you have, to rectify your palate,
An olive, capers, or some better salad
Ushering the mutton, with a short-legged hen
If we can get her, full of eggs, and then
Lemons, and wine for sauce; to these, a coney
Is not to be despaired of for our money;
And though fowl now be scarce, yet there are clerks,
The sky not falling, think we may have larks.
I'll tell you of more, and lie, so you will come:
Of partridge, pheasant, woodcock, of which some
May yet be there; and godwit if we can,
Knat, rail, and ruff too. Howsoe'er, my man
Shall read a piece of Virgil, Tacitus,
Livy, or of some better book to us,
Of which we'll speak our minds, amidst our meat;
And I'll profess no verses to repeat:
To this if aught appear, which I not know of,
That will the pastry, not my paper, show of.
Digestive cheese and fruit there sure will be,
But that which most doth take my Muse and me,
Is a pure cup of rich Canary wine,
Which is the Mermaid's now, but shall be mine:
Of which had Horace or Anacreon tasted,
Their lives, as do their lines, till now had lasted.
Tobacco, nectar, or the Thespian spring,
Are all but Luther's beer, to this I sing.
Of this we will sup free, but moderately,
And we will have no Pooly or Parrot by;
Nor shall our cups make any guilty men,
But, at our parting, we will be as when
We innocently met. No simple word
That shall be uttered at our mirthful board,
Shall make us sad next morning; or affright
The liberty that we'll enjoy to-night.

(*Ben Jonson*)

POST-OBITS AND THE POETS

He unto whom thou art so partial,
Oh, reader! is the well-known Martial,
The Epigrammatist: while living,
Give him the fame thou wouldst be giving;
So shall he hear, and feel, and know it—
  Post-obits rarely reach a poet.

(*Lord Byron*)

BOUGHT LOCKS

The golden hair that Gulla wears
  Is hers: who would have thought it?
She swears 'tis hers, and true she swears,
  For I know where she bought it.

(*Sir John Harington*)

TEMPERAMENT

In all thy humors, whether grave or mellow,
Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
Hast so much wit and mirth and spleen about thee,
There is no living with thee nor without thee.

(*Joseph Addison*)

A HINTED WISH

You told me, Maro, whilst you live
You'd not a single penny give,
But that, whene'er you chanct to die,
You'd leave a handsome legacy:
You must be mad beyond redress,
If my next wish you cannot guess!

(*Samuel Johnson*)

WHAT MAKES A HAPPY LIFE

What makes a happy life, dear friend,
If thou wouldst briefly learn, attend—
An income left, not earned by toil;
Some acres of a kindly soil;

The pot unfailing on the fire;
No lawsuits, seldom town attire;
Health; strength with grace; a peaceful mind;
Shrewdness with honesty combined;
Plain living; equal friends and free;
Evenings of temperate gayety;
A wife discreet yet blithe and bright;
Sound slumber that lends wings to night.
With all thy heart embrace thy lot,
Wish not for death, and fear it not.

(*Goldwin Smith*)

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG AND FAVORITE SLAVE

Dear youth, too early lost, who now art laid
Beneath the turf in green Labicum's glade,
O'er thee no storied urn, no labored bust
I rear to crumble with the crumbling dust;
But tapering box and shadowy vine shall wave,
And grass, with tears bedewed, shall clothe thy grave.
These gifts my sorrowing love to thee shall bring,
Gifts ever fresh and deathless as the Spring.
O when to me the fatal hour shall come,
Mine be as lowly and as green a tomb!

(*Goldwin Smith*)

EROTION

Dear father and dear mother: Let me crave
Your loving kindness there beyond the grave
For my Erotion, the pretty maid
Who bears these lines. Don't let her be afraid!
She's such a little lassie—only six—
To toddle down that pathway to the Styx
All by herself! Black shadows haunt those steeps
And Cerberus the Dread who never sleeps.
May she be comforted, and may she play
About you merry as the livelong day,

And in her childish prattle often tell
Of that old master whom she loved so well.
Oh earth, bear lightly on her! 'Tis her due;
The little girl so lightly bore on you.

(*Kirby Flower Smith*)

Decimus Junius Juvenalis

60–140

CELESTIAL WISDOM

(From the Tenth Satire)

Must hapless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Inquirer, cease: petitions yet remain,
Which Heaven may hear: nor deem religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.
Safe in his power, whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer,
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervors for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat.
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods he grants, who grants the power to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

(*Samuel Johnson*)

The Emperor Hadrian

76–138

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame:
  Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
  Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away.
  What is this absorbs me quite?
  Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be Death?
The world recedes: it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
  With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy Victory?
  O Death! where is thy Sting.

(*Alexander Pope*)

Decimus Magnus Ausonius

310–395

TO HIS WIFE

Be life what it has been, and let us hold,
Dear wife, the names we each gave each of old;
And let not time work change upon us two,
I still your boy, and still my sweetheart you.
What though I outlive Nestor? and what though
You in your turn a Sibyl's years should know?
Ne'er let us know old age or late or soon;
Count not the years, but take of each its boon.

(*Terrot Reaveley Glover*)

Claudius Claudianus

c. 400

THE OLD MAN OF VERONA

Happy the man, who his whole time doth bound
Within th' inclosure of his little ground,
Happy the man whom the same humble place,
The hereditary cottage of his race,
From his first rising infancy has known,
And by degrees sees gently bending down,
With natural propension, to that earth
Which both preserved his life, and gave him birth.
Him no false distant lights, by fortune set,
Could ever into foolish wanderings get.
He never dangers either saw or feared:
The dreadful storms at sea he never heard.
He never heard the shrill alarms of war,
Or the worse noises of the lawyers' bar.
No change of consuls marks to him the year;
The change of seasons is his calendar.
The cold and heat, winter and summer shows;
Autumn by fruits, and spring by flowers, he knows.
He measures time by landmarks, and has found
For the whole day the dial of his ground.
A neighboring wood, born with himself, he sees,
And loves his old contemporary trees.
He has only heard of near Verona's name,
And knows it, like the Indies, but by fame.
Does with a like concernment notice take
Of the Red sea, and of Benacus' lake.
Thus health and strength he to a third age enjoys,
And sees a long posterity of boys.
About the spacious world let others roam,
The voyage, life, is longest made at home.

(*Abraham Cowley*)

THE LONELY ISLE

Deep in a distant bay, and deeply hidden
There is an island far away from me

Which lulls the tumbling waves to dreamy quiet;
And there steep cliffs against the water's riot
Stand up, and to their shelter ships are bidden,
Where those curved arms shut in a tranquil sea.

(*Howard Mumford Jones*)

Medieval Latin Students' Songs

12th–13th centuries

A SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

We in our wandering,
Blithesome and squandering,
Tara, tantara, teino!

Eat to satiety,
Drink with propriety;
Tara, tantara, teino!

Laugh till our sides we split,
Rags on our hides we fit;
Tara, tantara, teino!

Jesting eternally,
Quaffing infernally:
Tara, tantara, teino!

Craft's in the bone of us,
Fear 'tis unknown of us:
Tara, tantara, teino!

When we're in neediness,
Thieve we with greediness:
Tara, tantara, teino!

Brother catholical,
Man apostolical,
Tara, tantara, teino!

Say what you will have done,
What you ask 'twill be done!
Tara, tantara, teino!

Folk, fear the toss of the
Horns of philosophy!
Tara, tantara, teino!

Here comes a quadruple
Spoiler and prodigal!
Tara, tantara, teino!

License and vanity
Pamper insanity:
Tara, tantara, teino!

As the Pope bade us do,
Brother to brother's true:
Tara, tantara, teino!

Brother, best friend, adieu!
Now, I must part from you!
Tara, tantara, teino!

When will our meeting be?
Glad shall our greeting be!
Tara, tantara, teino!

Vows valedictory
Now have the victory;
Tara, tantara, teino!

Clasped on each other's breast,
Brother to brother pressed,
Tara, tantara, teino!

(*John Addington Symonds*)

A PASTORAL

There went out in the dawning light,
A little rustic maiden;
Her flock so white, her crook so slight,
With fleecy new wool laden.

Small is the flock, and there you'll see
  The she-ass and the wether;
This goat's a he, and that's a she,
  The bull-calf and the heifer.

She looked upon the green sward, where
  A student lay at leisure:
"What do you there, young sir, so fair?"
  "Come, play with me, my treasure!"

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Latin Hymns

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come visit ev'ry pious mind;
Come pour thy joys on humankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.
  O source of uncreated light,
The Father's promis'd Paraclite!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heav'nly love inspire,
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing!
  Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sev'nfold energy,
Thou strength of his almighty hand,
Whose pow'r does heav'n and earth command!
Proceeding Spirit, our defense,
Who dost the gifts of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!
  Refine and purge our earthy parts;
But, O, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,

Then lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.
  Chase from our minds th' infernal foe,
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.
  Make us eternal truths receive,
And practice all that we believe:
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father and the Son, by thee.
  Immortal honor, endless fame,
Attend th' Almighty Father's name:
The Savior Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died;
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

(*John Dryden*)

THE TE DEUM

Thee, Sovereign God, our grateful accents praise;
We own thee Lord, and bless thy wondrus ways;
To thee, Eternal Father, earth's whole frame,
With loudest trumpets, sound immortal fame.
Lord God of Hosts! for thee the heavenly powers
With sounding anthems fill the vaulted towers.
Thy Cherubims thrice, Holy, Holy, Holy, cry;
Thrice, Holy, all the Seraphims reply,
And thrice returning echoes endless songs supply.
Both heaven and earth thy majesty display;
They owe their beauty to thy glorious ray.
Thy praises fill the loud apostles' choir;
The train of prophets in the song conspire.
Legions of martyrs in the chorus shine,
And vocal blood with vocal music join.
By these thy church, inspir'd by heavenly art,
Around the world maintains a second part;
And tunes her sweetest notes, O God, to thee,
The Father of unbounded majesty;
The Son, ador'd copartner of thy seat,

And equal everlaſting Paraclete.
Thou King of Glory, Chriſt, of the moſt high,
Thou coeternal filial Deity;
Thou who, to save the world's impending doom,
Vouchsaf'dſt to dwell within a Virgin's womb;
Old tyrant Death disarm'd, before thee flew
The bolts of heaven, and back the foldings drew,
To give access, and make thy faithful way;
From God's right hand thy filial beams display.
Thou art to judge the living and the dead;
Then spare those souls for whom thy veins have bled.
O take us up amongſt thy bleſt above,
To share with them thy everlaſting love.
Preserve, O Lord, thy people, and enhance
Thy blessing on thine own inheritance.
For ever raise their hearts, and rule their ways;
Each day we bless thee, and proclaim thy praise:
No age shall fail to celebrate thy name,
No hour neglect thy everlaſting fame.
Preserve our souls, O Lord, this day from ill;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy ſtill:
As we have hop'd, do thou reward our pain;
We've hop'd in thee—let not our hope be vain.

(*John Dryden ?*)

ITALIAN

Saint Francis of Assisi

1182–1226

CANTICA

Our Lord Christ: of order

Set Love in order, thou that lovest Me.
  Never was virtue out of order found;
And though I fill thy heart desirously,
  By thine own virtue I must keep My ground:
When to My love thou dost bring charity,
  Even she must come with order girt and gown'd.
    Look how the trees are bound
    To order, bearing fruit;
    And by one thing compute,
In all things earthly, order's grace or gain.

All earthly things I had the making of
  Were numbered and were measured then by Me;
And each was ordered to its end by Love,
  Each kept, through order, clean for ministry.
Charity most of all, when known enough,
  Is of her very nature orderly.
    Lo, now! what heat in thee,
    Soul, can have bred this rout?
    Thou putt'st all order out.
Even this love's heat must be its curb and rein.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Guido Guinicelli

13th century

SONNET

Of Moderation and Tolerance

He that has grown to wisdom hurries not,
  But thinks and weighs what Reason bids him do

And after thinking he retains his thought
  Until as he conceived the fact ensue.
Let no man to o'erweening pride be wrought,
  But count his state as Fortune's gift and due.
He is a fool who deems that none has sought
  The truth, save he alone, or knows it true.
Many strange birds are on the air abroad,
  Nor all are of one flight or of one force,
    But each after his kind dissimilar:
To each was portioned of the breath of God,
  Who gave them divers instincts from one source.
    Then judge not thou thy fellows what they are.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

CANZONE

He perceives his Rashness in Love, but has no choice

I HOLD him, verily of mean emprise,
  Whose rashness tempts a strength too great to bear;
As I have done, alas! who turned mine eyes
  Upon those perilous eyes of the most fair.
    Unto her eyes I bow'd;
No need her other beauties in that hour
    Should aid them, cold and proud:
As when the vassals of a mighty lord,
    What time he needs his power,
Are all girt round him to make strong his sword.

With such exceeding force the stroke was dealt
  That by mine eyes its path might not be stay'd;
But deep into the heart it pierced, which felt
  The pang of the sharp wound, and waxed afraid;
    Then rested in strange wise,
As when some creature utterly outworn
    Sinks into bed and lies.
And she the while doth in no manner care,
    But she goes her way in scorn,
Beholding herself alway proud and fair.

And she may be as proud as she shall please,
  For she is still the fairest woman found:
A sun she seems among the rest; and these
  Have all their beauties in her splendor drown'd.
    In her is every grace,—
  Simplicity of wisdom, noble speech,
    Accomplished loveliness;
All earthly beauty is her diadem,
    This truth my song would teach,—
My lady is of ladies chosen gem.

Love to my lady's service yieldeth me,—
  Will I, or will I not, the thing is so,—
Nor other reason can I say or see,
  Except that where it lists the wind doth blow.
    He rules and gives no sign;
Nor once from her did show of love upbuoy
    This passion which is mine.
It is because her virtue's strength and stir
    So fill her full of joy
That I am glad to die for love of her.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Jacopo la Lentino

13th century

SONNET

Of his Lady in Heaven

I HAVE it in my heart to serve God so
  That into Paradise I shall repair,—
  The holy place through the which everywhere
I have heard say that joy and solace flow.
Without my lady I were loath to go,—
  She who has the bright face and the bright hair;
  Because if she were absent, I being there,
My pleasure would be less than nought, I know.
Look you, I say not this to such intent
  As that I there would deal in any sin:

I only would behold her gracious mien,
And beautiful soft eyes, and lovely face,
That so it should be my complete content
To see my lady joyful in her place.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Giacomino Pugliesi

13th century

CANZONE

Of his Dead Lady

DEATH, why hast thou made life so hard to bear,
Taking my lady hence? Hast thou no whit
Of shame? The youngest flower and the most fair
Thou hast plucked away, and the world wanteth it.
O leaden Death, hast thou no pitying?
Our warm love's very spring
Thou stopp'st, and endest what was holy and meet;
And of my gladdening
Mak'st a most woeful thing,
And in my heart dost bid the bird not sing
That sang so sweet.

Once the great joy and solace that I had
Was more than is with other gentlemen:—
Now is my love gone hence, who made me glad.
With her that hope I lived in she hath ta'en
And left me nothing but these sighs and tears,—
Nothing of the old years
That come not back again,
Wherein I was so happy, being hers.
Now to mine eyes her face no more appears,
Nor doth her voice make music in mine ears,
As it did then.

O God, why hast thou made my grief so deep?
Why set me in the dark to grope and pine?
Why parted me from her companionship,
And crushed the hope which was gift of thine?

To think, dear, that I never any more
Can see thee as before!
  Who is it shuts thee in?
Who hides that smile for which my heart is sore,
And drowns those words that I am longing for,
  Lady of mine?

Where is my lady, and the lovely face
  She had, and the sweet motion when she walk'd?—
Her chaste, mild flavor—her so delicate grace—
  Her eyes, her mouth, and the dear way she talk'd?—
Her courteous bending—her most noble air—
The soft fall of her hair? . . .
My lady—she to whom my soul
  A gladness brought!
Now I do never see her anywhere,
And may not, looking in her eyes, gain there
  The blessing which I sought.

So if I had the realm of Hungary,
  With Greece, and all the Almayn even to France,
Or Saint Sophia's treasure-hoard, you see
  All could not give me back her countenance.
For since the day when my dear lady died
From us, (with God being born and glorified,)
  No more pleasaunce
Her image bringeth, seated at my side,
But only tears. Ay me! the strength and pride
  Which it brought once.

Had I my will, beloved, I would say
  To God, unto whose bidding all things bow,
That we were still together night and day:
  Yet be it done as His behests allow.
I do remember that while she remain'd
With me, she often called me her sweet friend;
  But does not now,
Because God drew her towards Him, in the end.
Lady, that peace which none but He can send
  Be thine. Even so.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Folgore da San Geminiano

13th century

SONNET

Of Virtue

The flower of Virtue is the heart's content;
And fame is Virtue's fruit that she doth bear;
And Virtue's vase is fair without and fair
Within; and Virtue's mirror brooks no taint;
And Virtue by her names is sage and saint;
And Virtue hath a steadfast front and clear;
And Love is Virtue's constant minister;
And Virtue's gift of gifts is pure descent.
And Virtue dwells with knowledge, and therein
Her cherished home of rest is real love;
And Virtue's strength is in a suffering will;
And Virtue's work is life exempt from sin,
With arms that aid; and in the sum hereof,
All Virtue is to render good for ill.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

ON KNIGHTHOOD

I

This morn a young squire shall be made a knight;
Whereof he fain would be right worthy found,
And therefore pledgeth lands and castles round
To furnish all that fits a man of might.
Meat, bread, and wine he gives to many a wight;
Capons and pheasants on his board abound,
Where serving men and pages march around.
Choice chambers, torches, and wax candle light.
Barbed steeds, a multitude, are in his thought,
Mailed men at arms and noble company,
Spears, pennants, housing cloths, bells richly wrought;
Musicians following with great barony
And jesters through the land his state have brought,
With dames and damsels whereso rideth he.

II

Comes Blithesomeness with mirth and merriment,
All decked in flowers, she seemeth a rose-tree;
Of linen, silk, cloth, fur, now beareth she
To the new knight a rich habiliment;
Head-gear and cap and garland flower-besprent,
So brave they were May-bloom he seemed to be;
With such a rout, so many and such glee,
That the floor shook. Then to her work she went;
And stood him on his feet in hose and shoon;
And purse and gilded girdle neath the fur
That drapes his goodly limbs, she buckles on;
Then bids the singers and sweet music stir,
And showeth him to ladies for a boon
And all who in that following went with her.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Pier Moronelli di Fiorenza

13th century

CANZONETTA

A Bitter Song to his Lady

O lady amorous,
Merciless lady,
Full blithely play'd ye
These your beguilings.
So with an urchin
A man makes merry,—
In mirth grows clamorous,
Laughs and rejoices,—
But when his choice is
To fall aweary,
Cheats him with silence.
This is Love's portion:—
In much wayfaring
With many burdens
He loads his servants,
But at the sharing,

The underservice
And overservice
Are alike barren.

As my disaſter
Your jeſt I cherish,
And well may perish.
Even so a falcon
Is sometimes taken
And scantly cautell'd;
Till when his maſter
At length to loose him,
To train and use him,
Is after all gone,—
The creature's throttled
And will not waken.
Wherefore, my lady,
If you will own me,
O look upon me!
If I'm not thought on,
At leaſt perceive me!
O do not leave me
So much forgotten!

If, lady, truly
You wish my profit,
What follows of it
Though ſtill you say so?—
For all your well-wishes
I ſtill am waiting.
I grow unruly,
And deem at laſt I'm
Only your paſtime.
A child will play so,
Who greatly relishes
Sporting and petting
With a little wild bird:
Unaware he kills it,—
Then turns it, feels it,

Calls it with a mild word,
Is angry after,—
Then again in laughter
Loud is the child heard.

O my delightful
My own, my lady,
Upon the Mayday
Which brought me to you
Was all my haste then
But a fool's venture?
To have my sight full
Of you propitious
Truly my wish was,
And to pursue you
And let love chasten
My heart to the center.
But warming, lady,
May end in burning.
Of all this yearning
What comes, I beg you?
In all your glances
What is't a man sees?—
Fever and ague.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Rustico di Filippo

1200?–1270

SONNET

Of the Making of Master Messerin

When God had finished Master Messerin,
He really thought it something to have done:
Bird, man, and beast had got a chance in one,
And each felt flattered, it was hoped, therein.
For he is like a goose i' the windpipe thin,
And like a cameleopard high i' the loins;
To which, for manhood, you'll be told, he joins

Some kinds of flesh-hues and a callow chin.
As to his singing he affects the crow;
As to his learning, beasts in general;
And sets all square by dressing like a man.
God made him, having nothing else to do;
And proved there is not anything at all
He cannot make, if that's a thing He can.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Guido Cavalcanti

1250–1301

SONNET

To his Lady Joan, of Florence

FLOWERS hast thou in thyself, and foliage
And what is good, and what is glad to see;
The sun is not so bright as thy visàge;
All is stark naught when one hath looked on thee;
There is not such a beautiful personage
Anywhere on the green earth verily;
If one fear love, thy bearing sweet and sage
Comforteth him, and no more fear hath he.
Thy lady friends and maidens ministering
Are all, for love of thee, much to my taste:
And much I pray them that in everything
They honor thee even as thou meritest,
And have thee in their gentle harboring:
Because among them all thou art the best.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

TO DANTE

RETURNING from its daily quest, my Spirit
Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:
It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind
Those ample virtues which it did inherit,
Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude
Of blind and maddening men: I then loved thee—
I loved thy lofty songs, and that sweet mood
When thou wert faithful to thyself and men.

I dare not now, through thy degraded state,
  Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain
I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet
  As we were wont. Again and yet again
Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly,
  And leave to thee thy true integrity.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

SONNET

Of an ill-favored Lady

Just look, Manetto, at that wry-mouth'd minx;
  Merely take notice what a wretch it is;
  How well contrived in her deformities,
How beastly favored when she scowls and blinks.
Why, with a hood on (if one only thinks)
  Or muffle of prim veils and scapularies,—
  And set together, on a day like this
Some pretty lady with the odious sphinx;—
Why, then thy sins could hardly have such weight,
  Nor thou be so subdued from Love's attack,
    Nor so possessed in Melancholy's sway,
But that perforce thy peril must be great
  Of laughing till the very heart-strings crack:
    Either thou'dst die, or thou must run away.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

BALLATA

In Exile at Sarzana

Because I think not ever to return,
    Ballad, to Tuscany,—
    Go therefore thou for me
    Straight to my lady's face,
    Who, of her noble grace,
    Shall show thee courtesy.

Thou seekest her in charge of many sighs,
  Full of much grief and of exceeding fear.
But have good heed thou come not to the eyes
  Of such as are sworn foes to gentle cheer:

For, certes, if this thing should chance,—from her
Thou then couldst only look
For scorn, and such rebuke
As needs must bring me pain;—
Yea, after death again
Tears and fresh agony.

Surely thou knowest, Ballad, how that Death
Assails me, till my life is almost sped:
Thou knowest how my heart still travaileth
Though the sore pangs which in my soul are bred:—
My body being now so nearly dead,
It cannot suffer more.
Then, going, I implore
That this my soul thou take
(Nay, do so for my sake,)
When my heart sets it free.

Ah! Ballad, undo thy dear offices
I do commend my soul, thus trembling;
That thou mayst lead it, for pure piteousness,
Even to that lady's presence whom I sing.
Ah! Ballad, say thou to her, sorrowing,
Whereso thou meet her then:
'This thy poor handmaiden
Is come, nor will be gone,
Being parted now from one
Who served Love painfully.'

Thou also, thou bewildered voice and weak,
That goest forth in tears from my grieved heart,
Shall, with my soul and with this ballad, speak
Of my dead mind, when thou dost hence depart,
Unto that lady (piteous as thou art!)
Who is so calm and bright,
It shall be deep delight
To feel her presence there.
And thou, Soul, worship her
Still in her purity.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Francesco da Barberino

1264–1348

OF CAUTION

Say, wouldst thou guard thy son,
That sorrow he may shun?
Begin at the beginning
And let him keep from sinning.

Wouldst guard thy house? One door
Make to it, and no more.
Wouldst guard thine orchard-wall?
Be free of fruit to all.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Dante Alighieri

1265–1321

FROM LA VITA NUOVA

The narrative of the New Life is quaint, embroidered with conceits, deficient in artistic completeness, but it has the simplicity of youth, the charm of sincerity, the freedom of personal confidence; and so long as there are lovers in the world, and so long as lovers are poets, this first and tenderest love-story of modern literature will be read with appreciation and responsive sympathy.—Charles Eliot Norton.

2

All ye that pass along Love's trodden way,
Pause ye awhile and say
  If there be any grief like unto mine:
I pray you that you hearken a short space
Patiently, if my case
  Be not a piteous marvel and a sign.
Love (never, certes, for my worthless part,
But of his own great heart),
  Vouchsafed to me a life so calm and sweet
That oft I heard folk question as I went
What such great gladness meant:—
  They spoke of it behind me in the street.

But now that fearless bearing is all gone
  Which with Love's hoarded wealth was given me;
  Till I am grown to be
So poor that I have dread to think thereon.

And thus it is that I, being like as one
  Who is ashamed and hides his poverty,
  Without seem full of glee,
And let my heart within travail and moan.

3

Death, always cruel, Pity's foe in chief,
Mother who brought forth grief,
  Merciless judgment and without appeal!
  Since thou alone hast made my heart to feel
  This sadness and unweal,
My tongue upbraideth thee without relief.

And now (for I must rid thy name of ruth)
Behoves me speak the truth
  Touching thy cruelty and wickedness:
  Not that they be not known; but ne'ertheless
  I would give hate more stress
With them that feed on love in very sooth.

Out of this world thou hast driven courtesy,
  And virtue, dearly prized in womanhood;
  And out of youth's gay mood
The lovely lightness is quite gone through thee.

Whom now I mourn, no man shall learn from me
  Save by the measure of these praises given.
  Whoso deserves not Heaven
May never hope to have her company.

8

The thoughts are broken in my memory,
  Thou lovely joy, whene'er I see thy face;

When thou art near me, Love fills up the space,
Often repeating, "If death irk thee, fly."
My face shows my heart's color, verily,
Which, fainting, seeks for any leaning-place;
Till, in the drunken terror of disgrace,
The very stones seem to be shrieking, "Die!"
It were a grievous sin, if one should not

Strive then to comfort my bewildered mind
(Though merely with a simple pitying)
For the great anguish which thy scorn has wrought
In the dead sight o' the eyes grown nearly blind,
Which look for death as for a blessed thing.

9

At whiles (yea oftentimes) I muse over
The quality of anguish that is mine
Through Love: then pity makes my voice to pine,
Saying, "Is any else thus, anywhere?"
Love smiteth me, whose strength is ill to bear;
So that of all my life is left no sign
Except one thought; and that, because 'tis thine,
Leaves not the body but abideth there.
And then if I, whom other aid forsook,
Would aid myself, and innocent of art
Would fain have sight of thee as a last hope,
No sooner do I lift mine eyes to look
Than the blood seems as shaken from my heart,
And all my pulses beat at once and stop.

12

My lady carries love within her eyes;
All that she looks on is made pleasanter;
Upon her path men turn to gaze at her;
He whom she greeteth feels his heart to rise,
And droops his troubled visage, full of sighs,
And of his evil heart is then aware:
Hate loves, and pride becomes a worshiper.

O women, help to praise her in somewise.
Humbleness, and the hope that hopeth well,
By speech of hers into the mind are brought,
And who beholds is blessèd oftenwhiles,
The look she hath when she a little smiles
Cannot be said, nor holden in the thought;
'Tis such a new and gracious miracle.

14

A very pitiful lady, very young,
Exceeding rich in human sympathies,
Stood by, what time I clamor'd upon Death
And at the wild words wandering on my tongue
And at the piteous look within mine eyes
She was affrighted, that sobs choked her breath.
So by her weeping where I lay beneath,
Some other gentle ladies came to know
My state, and made her go:
Afterward, bending themselves over me,
One said, "Awaken thee!"
And one, "What thing thy sleep disquieteth?"
With that, my soul woke up from its eclipse,
The while my lady's name rose to my lips:

But utter'd in a voice so sob-broken,
So feeble with the agony of tears,
That I alone might hear it in my heart;
And though that look was on my visage then
Which he who is ashamed so plainly wears,
Love made that I through shame held not apart,
But gazed upon them. And my hue was such
That they look'd at each other and thought of death;
Saying under their breath
Most tenderly, "O let us comfort him:"
Then unto me: "What dream
Was thine, that it hath shaken thee so much?"
And when I was a little comforted,
"This, ladies, was the dream I dreamt," I said.

"I was a-thinking how life fails with us
  Suddenly after such a little while;
    When Love sobb'd in my heart, which is his home.
Whereby my spirit wax'd so dolorous
  That in myself I said, with sick recoil:
    'Yea, to my lady too this Death must come.'
    And therewithal such a bewilderment
Possess'd me, that I shut mine eyes for peace;
And in my brain did cease
Order of thought, and every healthful thing.
Afterwards, wandering
    Amid a swarm of doubts that came and went,
Some certain women's faces hurried by,
And shrieked to me, 'Thou too shalt die, shalt die!'

"Then saw I many broken hinted sights
  In the uncertain state I stepp'd into.
    Meseem'd to be I know not in what place,
Where ladies through the streets, like mournful lights,
  Ran with loose hair, and eyes that frighten'd you,
    By their own terror, and a pale amaze:
    The while, little by little, as I thought,
The sun ceased, and the stars began to gather,
And each wept at the other;
And birds dropp'd in mid-flight out of the sky;
And earth shook suddenly;
    And I was 'ware of one, hoarse and tired out,
Who ask'd of me: 'Hast thou not heard it said? . . .
Thy lady, she that was so fair, is dead.'

"Then lifting up mine eyes, as the tears came,
  I saw the Angels, like a rain of manna,
    In a long flight flying back Heavenward;
Having a little cloud in front of them,
  After the which they went and said, 'Hosanna';
    And if they had said more, you should have heard.
    Then love said, 'Now shall all things be made clear:
Come and behold our lady where she lies.'

These 'wildering phantasies.
Then carried me to see my lady dead.
Even as I there was led,
    Her ladies with a veil were covering her;
And with her was such very humbleness
That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'

15

I felt a spirit of love begin to stir
  Within my heart, long time unfelt till then;
  And saw Love coming towards me fair and fain,
(That I scarce knew him for his joyful cheer),
Saying, "Be now indeed my worshiper!"
  And in his speech he laugh'd and laugh'd again.
  Then, while it was his pleasure to remain,
I chanced to look the way he had drawn near
And saw the Ladies Joan and Beatrice
  Approach me, this the other following,
    One and a second marvel instantly.
And even as now my memory speaketh this,
  Love spake it then: "The first is christen'd Spring;
    The second Love, she is so like to me."

16

My lady looks so gentle and so pure
  When yielding salutation by the way,
  That the tongue trembles and has nought to say,
And the eyes, which fain would see, may not endure.
And still, amid the praise she hears secure
  She walks with humbleness for her array;
  Seeming a creature sent from Heaven to stay
On earth, and show a miracle made sure.
She is so pleasant in the eyes of men
That through the sight the inmost heart doth gain
  A sweetness which needs proof to know it by:
And from between her lips there seems to move
A soothing essence that is full of love,
  Saying for ever to the spirit, "Sigh!"

21

Whatever while the thought comes over me
  That I may not again
    Behold that lady whom I mourn for now,
About my heart my mind brings constantly
  So much of extreme pain
    That I say, Soul of mine, why stayest thou?
    Truly the anguish, soul, that we must bow
Beneath, until we win out of this life,
  Gives me full oft a fear that trembleth:
  So that I call on Death
Even as on Sleep one calleth after strife,
Saying, Come unto me. Life showeth grim
And bare; and if one dies, I envy him,

For ever, among all my sighs which burn,
  There is a piteous speech
    That clamors upon death continually:
Yea, unto him doth my whole spirit turn
  Since first his hand did reach
    My lady's life with most foul cruelty.
    But from the height of woman's fairness, she,
Going up from us with the joy we had,
  Grew perfectly and spiritually fair;
  That so she treads even there
A light of Love which makes the Angels glad,
And even unto their subtle minds can bring
A certain awe of profound marveling.

24

Love's pallor and the semblance of deep ruth
  Were never yet shown forth so perfectly
  In any lady's face, chancing to see
Grief's miserable countenance uncouth,
As in thine, lady, they have sprung to soothe,
  When in mine anguish thou hast looked on me;
  Until sometimes it seems as if, through thee,
My heart might almost wander from its truth.

Yet so it is, I cannot hold mine eyes
  From gazing very often upon thine
    In the sore hope to shed those tears they keep;
And at such time, thou mak'st the pent tears rise
  Even to the brim, till the eyes waste and pine;
    Yet cannot they, while thou art present, weep.

26

A GENTLE thought there is will often start,
  Within my secret self, to speech of thee:
  Also of Love it speaks so tenderly
That much in me consents and takes its part.
'And what is this,' the soul saith to the heart,
  'That cometh thus to comfort thee and me,
  And thence where it would dwell, thus potently
Can drive all other thoughts by its strange art?'
And the heart answers: 'Be no more at strife
  'Twixt doubt and doubt: this is Love's messenger
    And speaketh but his words, from him received;
And all the strength it owns and all the life
  It draweth from the gentle eyes of her
    Who, looking on our grief, hath often grieved.'

28

YE pilgrim-folk, advancing pensively
  As if in thought of distant things, I pray,
  Is your own land indeed so far away—
As by your aspect it would seem to be—
That this our heavy sorrow leaves you free
  Though passing through the mournful town midway;
  Like unto men that understand to-day
Nothing at all of her great misery?
Yet if ye will but stay, whom I accost,
  And listen to my words a little space,
    At going ye shall mourn with a loud voice.
It is her Beatrice that she hath lost;
  Of whom the least word spoken holds such grace
    That men weep hearing it, and have no choice.

29

Beyond the sphere which spreads to wideſt space
Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above;
A new perception born of grieving Love
Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.
When it hath reached unto the end, and ſtays,
It sees a lady round whom splendors move
In homage; till, by the great light thereof
Abashed, the pilgrim spirit ſtands at gaze.
It sees her such, that when it tells me this
Which it hath seen, I underſtand it not,
It hath a speech so subtile and so fine.
And yet I know its voice within my thought
Often remembereth me of Beatrice:
So that I underſtand it, ladies minê.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Sonnet

TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI

Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I,
Led by some ſtrong enchantment, might ascend
A magic ship, whose charmèd sails should fly
With winds at will, where'er our thoughts might wend,
And that no change, nor any evil chance,
Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be
That even satiety should ſtill enhance
Between our hearts their ſtrict community,
And that the bounteous wizard then would place
Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
Companions of our wandering, and would grace
With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,
Our time, and each were as content and free
As I believe that thou and I should be.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

SONNET

Of Beatrice d' Portinari, on All Saints' Day

Last All Saints' holy-day, even now gone by,
  I met a gathering of damozels:
  She that came first, as one doth who excels,
Had Love with her, bearing her company:
A flame burned forward through her steadfast eye,
  As when in living fire spirit dwells:
  So, gazing with the boldness which prevails
O'er doubt, I knew an angel visibly.
As she passed on, she bowed her mild approof
  And salutation to all men of worth
Lifting the soul to solemn thoughts aloof.
  In Heaven itself that lady had her birth,
I think, and is with us for our behoof:
  Blessed are they who meet her on the earth.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

BALLATA

He will gaze upon Beatrice

Because mine eyes can never have their fill
Of looking at my lady's lovely face,
  I will so fix my gaze
That I may become blessed beholding her.
Even as an angel, up at his great height
Standing amid the light,
  Becometh blessed by only seeing God:—
So, though I be a simple earthly wight,
Yet none the less I might,
  Beholding her who is my heart's dear load,
Be blessed, and in the spirit soar abroad.
Such power abideth in that gracious one;
Albeit felt of none
  Save of him who, desiring, honors her.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SONNET

Of Beauty and Duty

Two ladies to the summit of my mind
  Have clomb, to hold an argument of love.
  The one has wisdom with her from above,
For every noblest virtue well designed:
The other, beauty's tempting power refined
  And the high charm of perfect grace approve:
  And I, as my sweet Master's will doth move,
At feet of both their favors am reclined.
Beauty and Duty in my soul keep strife,
  At question if the heart such course can take
    And 'twixt the two ladies hold its love complete.
    The fount of gentle speech yields answer meet,
  That Beauty may be loved for gladness sake,
And Duty in the lofty ends of life.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SESTINA

Of the Lady Pietra degli Scrovigni

To the dim light and the large circle of shade
I have clomb, and to the whitening of the hills,
There where we see no color in the grass.
Natheless my longing loses not its green,
It has so taken root in the hard stone
Which talks and hears as though it were a lady.

Utterly frozen is this youthful lady,
Even as the snow that lies within the shade;
For she is no more moved than is the stone
By the sweet season which makes warm the hills
And alters from afresh from white to green
Covering their sides again with flowers and grass.

When on her hair she sets a crown of grass
The thought has no more room for other lady,
Because she weaves the yellow with the green
So well that Love sits down there in the shade,—

Love who has shut me in among low hills
Faſter than between walls of granite-ſtone.

She is more bright than is a precious ſtone;
The wound she gives may not be healed with grass:
I therefore have fled far o'er plains and hills
For refuge from so dangerous a lady;
But from her sunshine nothing can give shade,—
Not any hill, nor wall, nor summer-green.

A while ago, I saw her dressed in green,—
So fair, she might have wakened in a ſtone
This love which I do feel even for her shade;
And therefore, as one woos a graceful lady,
I wooed her in a field that was all grass
Girdled about with very lofty hills.

Yet shall the ſtreams turn back and climb the hills
Before Love's flame in this damp wood and green
Burn, as it burns within a youthful lady,
For my sake, who would sleep away in ſtone
My life, or feed like beaſts upon the grass,
Only to see her garments caſt a shade.

How dark so'er the hills throw out their shade,
Under her summer-green the beautiful lady
Covers it, like a ſtone cover'd in grass.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Cino da Pistoia

1270–1336

MADRIGAL

To his Lady Selvaggia Vergiolesi; likening his Love to a search for Gold

I AM all bent to glean the golden ore
Little by little from the river-bed;
Hoping the day to see
When Crœsus shall be conquered in my ſtore.
Therefore, ſtill sifting where the sands are spread,
I labor patiently:

Till, thus intent on this thing and no more,—
  If to a vein of silver I were led,
        It scarce could gladden me.
And, seeing that no joy's so warm i' the core
  As this whereby the heart is comforted
        And the desire set free,—
Therefore, thy bitter love is still my scope,
  Lady, from whom it is my life's sore theme
More painfully to sift the grains of hope
  Than gold out of that stream.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SONNET

Of the Grave of Selvaggia, on the Monte della Sambuca

I was upon the high and blessed mound,
  And kissed, long worshipping, the stones and grass,
  There on the hard stones prostrate, where, alas!
That pure one laid her forehead in the ground.
Then were the springs of gladness sealed and bound,
  The day that unto Death's most bitter pass
  My sick heart's lady turned her feet, who was
Already in her gracious life renown'd.

So in that place I spake to Love, and cried:
  'O sweet my god, I am one whom Death may claim
    Hence to be his; for lo! my heart lies here.'
    Anon, because my Master lent no ear,
  Departing, still I called Selvaggia's name.
So with my moan I left the mountain-side.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

CANZONE

His Lament for Selvaggia

Ay me, alas! the beautiful bright hair
  That shed reflected gold
    O'er the green growths on either side of the way:
Ay me! the lovely look, open and fair,
  Which my heart's core doth hold

With all else of that best remembered day;
Ay me! the face made gay
With joy that Love confers;
Ay me! that smile of hers
Where whiteness as of snow was visible
Among the roses at all seasons red!
Ay me! and was this well,
O Death, to let me live when she is dead?

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Cecco Angiolieri, da Siena

c. 1300

SONNET

Of Becchina in a Rage

When I behold Becchina in a rage,
Just like a little lad I trembling stand
Whose master tells him to hold out his hand.
Had I a lion's heart, the sight would wage
Such a war against it, that in that sad stage
I'd wish my birth might never have been plann'd,
And curse the day and hour that I was bann'd
With such a plague for my life's heritage.
Yet even if I should sell me to the Fiend,
I must so manage matters in some way
That for her rage I may not care a fig;
Or else from death I cannot long be screen'd.
So I'll not blink the fact, but plainly say
It's time I got my valor to grow big.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SONNET

In absence from Becchina

My heart's so heavy with a hundred things
That I feel dead a hundred times a-day;
Yet death would be the least of sufferings,
For life's all suffering save what's slept away;

Though even in sleep there is no dream but brings
From dream-land such dull torture as it may.
And yet one moment would pluck out these stings,
If for one moment she were mine to-day
Who gives my heart the anguish that it has.
Each thought that seeks my heart for its abode
Becomes a wan and sorrow-stricken guest:
Sorrow has brought me to so sad a pass
That men look sad to meet me on the road;
Nor any road is mine that leads to rest.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SONNET

He rails against Dante, who has censured his homage to Becchina

Dante Alighieri in Becchina's praise
Won't have me sing and bears him like my lord.
He's but a pinchbeck florin, on my word;
Sugar he seems, but salt's in all his ways;
He looks like wheaten bread, who's bread of maize;
He's but a sty, though like a tower in height;
A falcon, till you find that he's a kite;
Call him a cock!—a hen's more like his case.
Go now to Florence, Sonnet of my own,
And there with dames and maids hold pretty parles,
And say that all he is doth only seem.
And I meanwhile will make him better known
Unto the Court of Provence, good King Charles;
And in this way we'll singe his skin for him.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

SONNET

Of all he would do

If I were fire, I'd burn the world away;
If I were wind, I'd turn my storms thereon;
If I were water, I'd soon let it drown;
If I were God, I'd sink it from the day;
If I were Pope, I'd never feel quite gay

Until there was no peace beneath the sun;
If I were Emperor, what would I have done?
I'd lop men's heads all around in my own way.
If I were Death, I'd look my father up;
If I were life, I'd run away from him;
And treat my mother to like calls and runs.
If I were Cecco (and that's all my hope),
I'd pick the nicest girls to suit my whim,
And other folk should get the ugly ones.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Francesco Petrarca

1304–1374

What he had achieved for the modern world was not merely to bequeath to his Italian imitators masterpieces of lyrical art unrivalled for perfection of workmanship, but also, and far more, to open out for Europe a new sphere of mental activity. Standing within the threshold of the middle ages, he surveyed the kingdom of the modern spirit, and, by his own inexhaustible industry in the field of scholarship, he determined what we call the revival of learning.—J. A. Symonds

VISIONS

I

Being one day at my window all alone,
So manie strange things happened me to see,
As much it grieveth me to thinke thereon.
At my right hand a hynde appear'd to mee,
So faire as mote the greatest god delite;
Two eager dogs did her pursue in chace,
Of which the one was blacke, the other white:
With deadly force so in their cruell race
They pincht the haunches of that gentle beast,
That at the last, and in short time, I spide,
Under a rocke, where she alas, oppreſt,
Fell to the ground, and there untimely dide.
Cruell death vanquishing so noble beautie
Oft makes me wayle so hard a destenie.

II

After, at sea a tall ship did appeare,
  Made all of heben and white yvorie;
The sailes of golde, of silke the tackle were:
  Milde was the winde, calme seem'd the sea to bee,
The skie eachwhere did show full bright and faire:
  With rich treasures this gay ship fraighted was:
But sudden storme did so turmoyle the aire,
  And tumbled up the sea, that she (alas)
Strake on a rock, that under water lay,
  And perished past all recoverie.
O! how great ruth, and sorrowfull assay,
  Doth vex my spirite with perplexitie,
Thus in a moment to see lost, and drown'd,
So great riches, as like cannot be found.

III

The heavenly branches did I see arise
  Out of the fresh and lustie lawrell tree,
Amidst the young greene wood of paradise;
  Some noble plant I thought my selfe to see:
Such store of birds therein yshrowded were,
  Chaunting in shade their sundrie melodie,
That with their sweetnes I was ravisht nere.
  While on this lawrell fixed was mine eie,
The skie gan everie where to overcast,
  And darkened was the welkin all about,
When sudden flash of heavens fire out brast,
  And rent this royall tree quite by the roote;
Which makes me much and ever to complaine;
For no such shadow shal be had againe.

VI

At last so faire a ladie did I spie,
  That thinking yet on her I burne and quake;
On hearbs and flowres she walked pensively,
  Milde, but yet love she proudly did forsake;

White seem'd her robes, yet woven so they were,
  As snow and golde together had been wrought:
Above the waſt a darke clowde shrouded her,
  A ſtinging serpent by the heele her caught;
Wherewith she languisht as the gathered floure;
  And, well assur'd, she mounted up to ioy.
Alas, on earth so nothing doth endure,
  But bitter griefe and sorrowfull annoy:
Which makes their life wretched and miserable,
Tossed with ſtormes of fortune variable.

VII

When I beheld this fickle truſtles ſtate
  Of vaine worlds glorie, flitting too and fro,
And mortall men tossed by troublous fate
  In reſtles seas of wretchedness and woe;
I wish I might this wearie life forgoe,
  And shortly turne unto my happie reſt,
Where my free spirite might not anie moe
  Be vexed with sights, that doo her peace moleſt.
And ye, faire ladie, in whose bounteous breſt
  All heavenly grace and vertue shrined is,
When ye these rythmes doo read, and vew the reſt,
  Loath this base world, and thinke of heavens blis:
And though ye be the faireſt of Gods creatures,
Yet thinke, that Death shall spoyle your godly features.

(*Edmund Spenser*)

SUMMER IS COME

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale.
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart has hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new repairèd scale;

The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings.
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale,
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

(*The Earl of Surrey*)

LOVE'S FIDELITY

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice:
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen;
In presence prest of people mad or wise;
Set me in high, or yet in low degree;
In longest night, or in the shortest day;
In clearest sky, or where the clouds thickest be;
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray:
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, alive whereso I dwell,
Sick or in health, in evil frame or good,
Hers will I be; and only with this thought
Content myself although my chance be nought.

(*The Earl of Surrey*)

LOVE'S INCONSISTENCY

I find no peace, and all my war is done;
I fear and hope, I burn and freeze likewise;
I fly above the wind, yet cannot rise;
And nought I have, yet all the world I seize on;
That looseth, nor locketh, holdeth me in prison,
And holds me not, yet can I 'scape no wise;
Nor lets me live, nor die, at my devise,
And yet of death it giveth none occasion.
Without eyes I see, and without tongue I plain;
I wish to perish, yet I ask for health;
I love another, and yet I hate myself;
I feed in sorrow, and laugh in all my pain;

Lo, thus displeaseth me both death and life,
And my delight is causer of my grief.

(*Sir Thomas Wyatt*)

SIGNS OF LOVE

If amorous faith, a heart of guileless ways,
  Soft languors, courteously controlled desire,
  And virtuous will, kindled with noble fire,
And lengthened wanderings in a lightless maze;
If thoughts, which evermore the brow displays,
  Or words that faint and brokenly suspire,
  Still checked with fear and shame; if hues no higher
Than the pale violet hath, or love displays;
If holding some one than one's self more dear,
  If sorrowing and sighing evermore,
  If chewing grief, and rage, and many a cross,
If burning far away, and freezing near,
  Are signs that Love consumes me to the core,
  Yours, lady, is the fault and mine the loss.

(*C. B. Cayley*)

IF IT BE DESTINED

If it be destined that my Life, from thine
  Divided, yet with thine shall linger on
Till, in the later twilight of Decline,
  I may behold those Eyes, their luster gone;
When the gold tresses that enrich thy brow
  Shall all be faded into silver-gray,
From which the wreaths that well bedeck them now
  For many a Summer shall have fall'n away;
Then should I dare to whisper in your ears
  The pent-up Passion of so long ago,
That Love which hath survived the wreck of years
  Hath little else to pray for, or bestow,
Thou wilt not to the broken heart deny
The boon of one too-late relenting Sigh.

(*Edward FitzGerald*)

Giovanni Boccaccio

1313–1375

SONNETS

Inscription for a Portrait of Dante

Dante Alighieri, a dark oracle,
  Of wisdom and of art, I am; whose mind
  Has to my country such great gifts assign'd
That men account my powers a miracle.
My lofty fancy passed as low as Hell,
  As high as Heaven, secure and unconfin'd;
  And in my noble book doth every kind
Of earthly lore and heavenly doctrine dwell.
Renownéd Florence was my mother,—nay,
  Stepmother unto me her piteous son,
    Through sin of cursed slander's tongue and tooth.
Ravenna sheltered me so cast away;
  My body is with her,—my soul with One
    For whom no envy can make dim the truth.

Of his last sight of Fiammetta

Round her red garland and her golden hair
  I saw a fire about Fiammetta's head;
  Thence to a little cloud I watched it fade,
Than silver or than gold more brightly fair;
And like a pearl that a gold ring doth bear,
  Even so an angel sat therein, who sped
  Alone and glorious throughout heaven, array'd
In sapphires and in gold that lit the air.
Then I rejoiced as hoping happy things,
  Who rather should have then discerned how God
    Had haste to make my lady all His own,
Even as it came to pass. And with these stings
  Of sorrow, and with life's most weary load
    I dwell, who fain would be where she is gone.

Of Three Girls and of their Talk

By a clear well, within a little field
  Full of green grass and flowers of every hue,
  Sat three young girls, relating (as I knew)
Their loves. And each had twined a bough to shield
Her lovely face; and the green leaves did yield
  The golden hair their shadow; while the two
  Sweet colors mingled, both blown lightly through
With a soft wind for ever stirred and still'd.
After a little while one of them said,
  (I heard her,) "Think! If, ere the next hour struck,
    Each of our lovers should come here to-day,
Think you that we should fly or feel afraid?"
  To whom the others answered, "From such luck
    A girl would be a fool to run away."

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Fazio degli Uberti

1326–1360

OF ENGLAND, AND OF ITS MARVELS

Now to Great Britain we must make our way,
Unto which kingdom Brutus gave its name
What time he won it from the giants' rule.
'Tis thought at first its name was Albion,
And Anglia, from a damsel, afterwards.
The island is so great and rich and fair,
It conquers others that in Europe be,
Even as the sun surpasses other stars,
Many and great sheep-pastures bountifully
Nature has set there, and herein more bless'd,
That they can hold themselves secure from wolves.
Black amber also doth the land enrich,
(Whose properties my guide Solinus here
Told me, and how its color comes to it;)

And pearls are found in great abundance too.
The people are as white and comely-faced

As they of Ethiop land are black and foul.
Many hot springs and limpid fountain-heads
We found about this land, and spacious plains,
And divers beasts that dwell within thick woods.
Plentiful orchards too and fertile fields
It has, and castle-forts, and cities fair
With palaces and girth of lofty walls.
And proud wide rivers without any fords
We saw, and flesh, and fish, and crops enough.
Justice is strong throughout those provinces.

Now this I saw not; but so strange a thing
It was to hear, and by all men confirm'd,
That it is fit to note it as I heard;—
To wit, there is a certain islet here
Among the rest, where folk are born with tails,
Short, as are found in stags and such-like beasts.
For this I vouch,—that when a child is freed
From swaddling bands, the mother without stay
Passes elsewhere, and 'scapes the care of it.
I put no faith herein; but it is said
Among them, how such marvelous trees are there
That they grow birds, and this is their sole fruit.

Forty times eighty is the circuit ta'en,
With ten times fifteen, if I do not err,
By our miles reckoning its circumference.
Here every metal may be dug; and here
I found the people to be given to God,
Steadfast, and strong, and restive to constraint.
Nor is this strange, when one considereth;
For courage, beauty, and large-heartedness,
Were there, as it is said, in ancient days.

North Wales, and Orkney, and the bankes of Thames,
Land's End and Stonehenge and Northumberland,
I chose with my companion to behold.
We went to London, and I saw the Tower
Where Guenevere her honor did defend,

With the Thames river which runs close to it.
I saw the castle which by force was ta'en
With the three shields by gallant Lancelot,
The second year that he did deeds of arms.
I beheld Camelot despoiled and waste;
And was where one and the other had her birth,
The maids of Corbonek and Astolat.
Also I saw the castle where Geraint
Lay with his Enid; likewise Merlin's stone,
Which for another's love I joyed to see.
I found the tract where is the pine-tree well,
And where of old the knight of the black shield
With weeping and with laughter kept the pass,
What time the pitiless and bitter dwarf
Before Sir Gawaine's eyes discourteously
With many heavy stripes led him away.
I saw the valley which Sir Tristram won
When having slain the giant hand to hand
He set the stranger knights from prison free.
And last I viewed the field, at Salisbury,
Of that great martyrdom which left the world
Empty of honor, valor, and delight.

So, compassing that Island round and round,
I saw and hearkened many things and more
Which might be fair to tell but which I hide.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Franco Sacchetti

1335–1400?

CATCH

On a Wet Day

As I walk'd thinking through a little grove,
  Some girls that gathered flowers came passing me,
  Saying, "Look here! look there!" delightedly.
"Oh, here it is!" "What's that?" "A lily, love."
"And there are violets!"

"Further for roses! Oh, the lovely pets—
The darling beauties! Oh, the nasty thorn!
Look here, my hand's all torn!"
"What's that that jumps!" "Oh, don't! it's a grass-
hopper!"
"Come run, come run,
Here's bluebells!" "Oh, what fun!"
"Not that way! Stop her!"
"Yes, this way!" "Pluck them, then!"
"Oh, I've found mushrooms! Oh, look here!" "Oh, I'm
Quite sure that further on we'll get wild thyme."

"Oh, we shall stay too long, it's going to rain!
There's lightning, oh there's thunder!"
"Oh, shan't we hear the vesper bell, I wonder?"
"Why, it's not nones, you silly little thing;
And don't you hear the nightingales that sing
Fly away O die away?"
"Oh, I hear something! Hush!"
"Why, where? what is it, then?" "Ah! in that bush!"
So every girl here knocks it, shakes and shocks it,
Till with the stir they make
Out skurries a great snake.
"O Lord! O me! Alack! Ah me! alack!"
They scream, and then all run and scream again,
And then in heavy drops down comes the rain.

Each running at the other in a fright,
Each trying to get before the other, and crying,
And flying, stumbling, tumbling, wrong or right;
One sets her knee
There where her foot should be;
One has her hands and dress
All smothered up with mud in a fine mess;
And one gets trampled on by two or three.
What's gathered is let fall
About the wood and not picked up at all.
The wreaths of flowers are scattered on the ground;
And still as screaming hustling without rest

They run this way and that and round and round,
She thinks herself in luck who runs the best.

I stood quite still to have a perfect view,
And never noticed till I got wet through.

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

Lorenzo de' Medici

1448–1492

A LYRIC

I

How can I sing light-souled and fancy-free,
When my loved lord no longer smiles on me?

Dances and songs and merry wakes I leave
  To lovers fair, more fortunate and gay;
Since to my heart so many sorrows cleave
  That only doleful tears are mine for aye:
  Who hath heart's ease, may carol, dance, and play;
While I am fain to weep continually.

How can I sing light-souled and fancy-free,
When my loved lord no longer smiles on me?

I too had heart's ease once, for so Love willed,
  When my lord loved me with love strong and great:
But envious fortune my life's music stilled,
  And turned to sadness all my gleeful state.
  Ah me! Death surely were less desolate
Than thus to live and love-neglected be!

How can I sing light-souled and fancy-free,
When my loved lord no longer smiles on me?

One only comfort soothes my heart's despair,
  And mid this sorrow lends my soul some cheer;
Unto my lord I ever yielded fair
  Service of faith untainted pure and clear;
  If then I die thus guiltless, on my bier
It may be she will shed one tear for me.

How can I sing light-souled and fancy-free,
When my loved lord no longer smiles on me?

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Niccolo Machiavelli

1469–1527

OPPORTUNITY

"But who art thou, with curious beauty graced,
O woman, stamped with some bright heavenly seal?
Why go thy feet on wings, and in such haste?"

"I am that maid whose secret few may steal,
Called Opportunity. I hasten by
Because my feet are treading on a wheel,

"Being more swift to run than birds to fly.
And rightly on my feet my wings I wear,
To blind the sight of those who track and spy;

"Rightly in front I hold my scattered hair
To veil my face, and down my breast to fall,
Lest men should know my name when I am there;

"And leave behind my back no wisp at all
For eager folk to clutch, what time I glide
So near, and turn, and pass beyond recall."

"Tell me; who is that Figure at thy side?"
"Penitence. Mark this well that by degrees
Who lets me go must keep her for his bride.

"And thou hast spent much time in talk with me
Busied with thoughts and fancies vainly grand,
Nor hast remarked, O fool, neither dost see
How lightly I have fled beneath thy hand."

(*James Elroy Flecker*)

Michelangelo Buonarroti

1475–1564

THE DOOM OF BEAUTY

Choice soul, in whom, as in a glass, we see,
  Mirrored in thy pure form and delicate,
  What beauties heaven and nature can create,
  The paragon of all their works to be!
Fair soul, in whom love, pity, piety,
  Have found a home, as from thy outward state
  We clearly read, and are so rare and great
  That they adorn none other like to thee!
Love takes me captive; beauty binds my soul;
  Pity and mercy with their gentle eyes
  Wake in my heart a hope that cannot cheat.
What law, what destiny, what fell control,
  What cruelty, or late or soon, denies
  That death should spare perfection so complete?

(*John Addington Symonds*)

CELESTIAL LOVE

No mortal thing enthralled these longing eyes
  When perfect peace in thy fair face I found;
  But far within, where all is holy ground,
  My soul felt Love, her comrade of the skies:
For she was born with God in Paradise;
  Nor all the shows of beauty shed around
  This fair false world her wings to earth have bound:
  Unto the Love of Loves aloft she flies.
Nay, things that suffer death, quench not the fire
  Of deathless spirits; nor eternity
  Serves sordid Time, that withers all things rare.
Not love but lawless impulse is desire:
  That slays the soul; our love makes still more fair
  Our friends on earth, fairer in death on high.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

ON THE BRINK OF DEATH

Now hath my life across a stormy sea
  Like a frail bark reached that wide port where all
  Are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall
  Of good and evil for eternity.
Now know I well how that fond phantasy
  Which made my soul the worshiper and thrall
  Of earthly art, is vain; how criminal
  Is that which all men seek unwillingly.
Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,
  What are they when the double death is nigh?
  The one I know for sure, the other dread.
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
  My soul that turns to His great love on high,
  Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

JOY MAY KILL

Too much good luck no less than misery
  May kill a man condemned to mortal pain,
  If, lost to hope and chilled in every vein,
  A sudden pardon comes to set him free.
Thus thy unwonted kindness shown to me
  Amid the gloom where only sad thoughts reign,
  With too much rapture bringing light again,
  Threatens my life more than that agony.
Good news and bad may bear the self-same knife;
  And death may follow both upon their flight;
  For hearts that shrink or swell, alike will break.
Let then thy beauty, to preserve my life,
  Temper the source of this supreme delight,
  Lest joy so poignant slay a soul so weak.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

LOVE'S JUSTIFICATION

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed:

For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

(*William Wordsworth*)

TO THE SUPREME BEING

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may;
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

(*William Wordsworth*)

TO VITTORIA COLONNA

When the prime mover of my many sighs
  Heaven took through death from out her earthly place,
  Nature, that never made so fair a face,
  Remained ashamed, and tears were in all eyes.

O fate, unheeding my impassioned cries!
  O hopes fallacious! O thou spirit of grace,
  Where art thou now? Earth holds in its embrace
  Thy lovely limbs, thy holy thoughts the skies.
Vainly did cruel death attempt to ſtay
  The rumor of thy virtuous renown,
  That Lethe's waters could not wash away!
A thousand leaves, since he hath ſtricken thee down,
  Speak of thee, not to thee could Heaven convey,
  Except through death, a refuge and a crown.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

DANTE

What should be said of him cannot be said;
  By too great splendor is his name attended;
  To blame is easier than those who him offended,
  Than reach the fainteſt glory round him shed.
This man descended to the doomed and dead
  For our inſtruction; then to God ascended;
  Heaven opened wide to him its portals splendid,
  Who from his country's, closed againſt him, fled.
Ungrateful land! To its own prejudice
  Nurse of his fortunes; and this showeth well
  That the moſt perfect moſt of grief shall see.
Among a thousand proofs let one suffice,
  That as his exile hath no parallel,
  Ne'er walked the earth a greater man than he.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

POEMS

3

Ravished by all that to the eyes is fair,
Yet hungry for the joys that truly bless,
My soul can find no ſtair
To mount to heaven, save earth's loveliness.
For from the ſtars above
Descends a glorious light
That lifts our longing to their higheſt height

And bears the name of love.
Nor is there aught can move
A gentle heart, or purge or make it wise,
But beauty and the starlight of her eyes.

(*George Santayana*)

Giovanni della Casa

1503–1556

TO SLEEP

O Sleep, O tranquil son of noiseless Night,
  Of humid, shadowy Night; O dear repose
  For wearied men, forgetfulness of woes
  Grievous enough the bloom of life to blight!
Succor this heart that hath outworn delight,
  And knows no rest; these tired limbs compose;
  Fly to me, Sleep; thy dusky vans disclose
  Over my languid eyes, then cease thy flight.
Where, where is Silence, that avoids the day?
  Where the light dreams, that with a wavering tread
  And unsubstantial footing follow thee?
Alas! in vain I call thee; and these gray,
  These frigid shades flatter in vain. O bed,
  How rough with thorns! O nights, how harsh to me!

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Giovanni Battista Guarini

1537–1612

SPRING

O Spring, thou youthful beauty of the year,
Mother of flowers, bringer of warbling quires,
Of all sweet new green things and new desires,
Thou, Spring, returnest; but, alas! with thee
No more return to me
The calm and happy days these eyes were used to see.
Thou, thou returnest, thou,
But with these returns now
Nought else but dread remembrance of the pleasure
I took in my lost treasure.

Thou still, thou still, art the same blithe, sweet thing
Thou ever wast, O Spring;
But I, in whose weak orbs these tears arise,
And what I was no more, dear to another's eyes.

(*Leigh Hunt*)

Torquato Tasso

1544–1595

TO HIS MISTRESS IN ABSENCE

Far from thy dearest self, the scope
Of all my aims,
I waste in secret flames;
And only live because I hope.

O when will Fate restore
The joys, in whose bright fire
My expectation shall expire,
That I may live because I hope no more!

(*Thomas Stanley*)

Giordano Bruno

1548–1600

THE PHILOSOPHIC FLIGHT

Now that these wings to speed my wish ascend,
The more I feel vast air beneath my feet,
The more toward boundless air on pinions fleet,
Spurning the earth, soaring to heaven, I tend:
Nor makes them stoop their flight the direful end
Of Dædal's son; but upward still them beat.
What life the while with this death could compete,
If dead to earth at last I must descend?
My own heart's voice in the void air I hear.
Where wilt thou bear me, O rash man! Recall
Thy daring will! This boldness waits on fear!
Dread not, I answer, that tremendous fall:
Strike through the clouds, and smile when death is near,
If death so glorious be our doom at all!

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Gabriello Chiabrera

1562–1637

EPITAPHS

I

Weep not, beloved friends! nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
Have I been taken; this is genuine life,
And this alone,—the life which now I live
In peace eternal; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end.—
Francesco Ceni after death enjoined
That thus his tomb should speak for him. And surely
Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
Long to continue in this world,—a world
That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
To good, whereof itself is destitute.

III

O thou who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste!
'T will be no fruitless moment. I was born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
To sacred studies; and the Roman Shepherd
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
Well did I watch, much labored, nor had power
To escape from many and strange indignities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
But did not fall; for Virtue braves all shocks,
Upon herself resting immovably.
Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, king of France,
And in his hands I saw a high reward
Stretched out for my acceptance: but Death came.
Now, reader, learn from this my fate, how false,

How treacherous to her promise, is the world,
And trust in God,—to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptered potentates of earth.

IV

There never breathed a man, who, when his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Toils long and hard. The warrior will report
Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well steered galleys did I rule.
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic Pillars,
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft—and—oft.
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Availed not to my vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp, and frequent, have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can suffice
To equalize the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life,—a calm one finds,
And one a tempest,—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang
Of noble parents: seventy years and three
Lived I,—then yielded to a slow disease.

VI

Destined to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
In Malta the white symbol of the Cross.
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
Of Libya, and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 't was my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
That stripped of arms I to my end am brought
On the soft down of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life!

VIII

Not without heavy grief of heart did he
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
A brother's child, most tenderly beloved!
Francesco was the name the youth had borne,—
Possobonnelli his illustrious house;
And when beneath this stone the corse was laid,
The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life
Had scarcely flowered: and at this early time,
By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheered his country; to his kin
He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts
His friends had in their fondness entertained
He suffered not to languish or decay.
Now is there not good reason to break forth
Into a passionate lament? O soul!
Short while a pilgrim in our nether world,

Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air;
And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,—
An everlasting spring!—in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was once
From thy mild manners quietly exalted.

(*William Wordsworth*)

Tomasso Campanella

1568–1639

THE PEOPLE

The people is a beast of muddy brain
  That knows not its own force, and therefore stands
  Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands
  Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein:
One kick would be enough to break the chain;
  But the beast fears, and what the child demands,
  It does; nor its own terror understands,
  Confused and stupefied by bugbears vain.
Most wonderful! with its own hand it ties
  And gags itself—gives itself death and war
  For pence doled out by kings from its own store.
Its own are all things between earth and heaven;
  But this it knows not; and if one arise
  To tell this truth, it kills him unforgiven.

(*John Addington Symonds*)

Vittorio Alfieri

1749–1803

TO DANTE

"Great father Alighier, if from the skies
This thy disciple prostrate thou dost see
Before thy gravestone, shaken with deep sighs,
O turn thou not in wrathfulness from me!
O of thy kindness, favoring pure desires,
Illuminate me with a ray of thine;
Must who to pristine, deathless fame aspires
Take arms 'gainst envy and each fell design?"

"I did so, son, to my great sorrow, for
Thereby the names of men too vile to tread
Under my feet are heard for evermore.
If thou dost trust in me, why droop thy head?
Go thunder, triumph, and if thou shouldst chance
To meet with such, pass by nor deign a glance."

(*Lorna De' Lucchi*)

Jacopo Vittorelli

1749–1835

ON A NUN

Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy; and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And gazing upon *either, both* required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired
Becomes extinguish'd, soon—too soon—expires:
But thine, within the closing gate retired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But *thou,* at least, from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never-meeting eyes,
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice once more:
I to the marble, where *my* daughter lies,
Rush,—the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock—but none replies.

(*Lord Byron*)

Giacomo Leopardi

1798–1837

A SÈ STESSO

Now rest for evermore, my weary heart!
Perished the last illusion I believed
Eternal, perished! Truly I can tell
How of our cherished dreams
The hope is quenched and the desire as well.
Now rest for evermore!
Enough of strife!

There's nothing worth one throb of thine; this earth
Deserveth not a sigh! Bitter is life
And wearisome, nought else;
The world's defiled!
Despair for the last time and then be still!
Fate made us at our birth no gift save death;
Scorn nature now, and brutal destiny
Who ruleth hidden for the common ill,
And of all things the infinite vanity!

(*Lorna De' Lucchi*)

L'INFINITO

I ALWAYS loved this solitary hill,
This hedge as well, which takes so large a share
Of the far-flung horizon from my view;
But seated here, in contemplation lost,
My thought discovers vaster space beyond
Supernal silence and unfathomed peace;
Almost I am afraid; then, since I hear
The murmur of the wind among the leaves,
I match that infinite calm unto this sound
And with my mind embrace eternity,
The vivid, speaking present and dead past;
In such immensity my spirit drowns,
And sweet to me is shipwreck in this sea.

(*Lorna De' Lucchi*)

Giosuè Carducci

1836–1907

SNOWFALL

SILENTLY, slowly falls the snow from an ashen sky,
Cries, and sounds of life from the city rise no more,

No more the hawker's shout and the sound of running
wheels,
No more the joyous song of love and youth arise.

Raucously from the somber spire through the leaden air
The hours moan, like sighs of a world removed from time.

Wandering birds insistent knock on the glowing panes.
My ghostly friends return, and gaze, and call to me.

Soon, my dear ones, soon—be still, O dauntless heart—
Down to the silence I come, in the shadow I will rest.

(*Romilda Rendel*)

PRIMO VERE

Behold from sluggish winter's arm
Spring lifts herself again:
Naked before the steel-cold air
She shivers as in pain;
Look, Lalage, is that a tear
In the sun's eye which yet shines clear?

From beds of snow the flowers awake
Lifting in deep amaze
To heaven their eager eyes: but yet
More in that wistful gaze
Than wonder lies: sure trembles there,
O Lalage, some memory fair,

Some dream which 'neath the coverlet white
Of winter snow they dreamed,
Some sleeping sight of dewy dawns
And summer suns that gleamed,
And thy bright eyes, O Lalage;
Was not the dream a prophecy?

To-day my spirit sleeps and dreams;
Where do my far thoughts fly?
Close to thy beauty's face we stand
And smile, the spring and I;—
Yet, Lalage, whence come these tears?
Has spring, too, felt the doom of years?

(*John Bailey*)

Popular Songs of Tuscany

1

"Sleeping or waking, thou sweet face,
Lift up thy fair and tender brow:
List to thy love in this still place;
He calls thee to thy window now:
But bids thee not the house to quit,
Since in the night this were not meet.
Come to thy window, stay within;
I stand without, and sing and sing:
Come to thy window, stay at home;
I stand without, and make my moan."

2

"It was the morning of the first of May,
In the close I went to pluck a flower;
And there I found a bird of woodland gay,
Who whiled with songs of love the silent hour.
O bird, who fliest from fair Florence, how
Dear love begins, I prithee teach me now!—
Love it begins with music and with song,
And ends with sorrow and with sighs ere long."

3

"Passing across the billowy sea,
I let, alas, my poor heart fall;
I bade the sailors bring it me;
They said they had not seen it fall.

I asked the sailors, one and two;
They said that I had given it you.
I asked the sailors, two and three;
They said that I had given it thee."

4

"Strew me with blossoms when I die,
Nor lay me 'neath the earth below;
Beyond those walls, there let me lie,
Where oftentimes we used to go.
There lay me to the wind and rain;
Dying for you, I feel no pain:
There lay me to the sun above;
Dying for you, I die of love."

(*John Addington Symonds*)

SPANISH

Juan II of Castile

1405–1454

CANCION

O LOVE, I never, never thought
  Thy power had been so great,
  That thou couldſt change my fate
By changes in another wrought,
Till now, alas! I know it.

I thought I knew thee well,
  For I had known thee long;
  But though I felt thee ſtrong,
I felt not all thy spell.

Nor ever, ever had I thought
  Thy power had been so great,
  That thou couldſt change my fate
By changes in another wrought
Till now, alas! I know it.

(*George Ticknor*)

Diego de Saldaña

15th century

EYES SO TRISTFUL

EYES so triſtful, eyes so triſtful,
Heart so full of care and cumber,
I was lapped in reſt and slumber,
Ye have made me wakeful, wiſtful!
In this life of labor endless
Who shall comfort my diſtresses?
Querulous my soul and friendless
In its sorrow shuns caresses.

Ye have made me, ye have made me
Querulous of you, that care not,
Eyes so tristful, yet I dare not
Say to what ye have betrayed me.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Anonymous

15th century

VILLANCICO

Three dark maids,—I loved them when
In Jaën,—
Axa, Fatima, Marien.

Three dark maids who went together
Picking olives in clear weather,
My, but they were in fine feather
In Jaën,—
Axa, Fatima, Marien!—

There the harvests they collected,
Turning home with hearts dejected,
Haggard where the sun reflected
In Jaën,—
Axa, Fatima, Marien—

Three dark Moors so lovely, they—
Three dark Moors so lovely, they
Plucked the apples on the day
Near Jaën,—
Axa, Fatima, Marien.

(*Thomas Walsh*) [1]

Cristobal de Castillejo

1490–1550

SOME DAY, SOME DAY

Some day, some day
O troubled breast,

[1] Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America.

Shalt thou find rest.
If Love in thee
To grief give birth,
Six feet of earth
Can more than he;
There calm and free
And unoppressed
Shalt thou find rest.
The unattained
In life at last,
When life is passed
Shall all be gained;
And no more pained,
No more distressed,
Shalt thou find rest.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Anonymous

16th century ?

THE SIESTA

Airs! that wander and murmur round,
  Bearing delight where'er ye blow,—
Make in the elms a lulling sound,
  While my lady sleeps in the shade below.

Lighten and lengthen her noonday rest,
  Till the heat of the noonday sun is o'er:
Sweet be her slumbers,—though in my breast
  The pain she has waked may slumber no more!
Breathing soft from the blue profound,
  Bearing delight where'er ye blow,
Make in the elms a lulling sound,
  While my lady sleeps in the shade below.

Airs! that over the bending boughs,
  And under the shadows of the leaves,
Murmur soft, like my timid vows,
  Or the secret sighs my bosom heaves,—

Gently sweeping the grassy ground,
  Bearing delight where'er ye blow,
Make in the elms a lulling sound,
  While my lady sleeps in the shade below.

(*William Cullen Bryant*)

Old Spanish Ballads

16th century ?

GENTLE RIVER, GENTLE RIVER

Gentle river, gentle river,
Lo, thy streams are stained with gore.
Many a brave and noble captain
Floats along thy willowed shore.

All beside thy limpid waters,
All beside thy sands so bright,
Moorish chiefs and Christian warriors
Joined in fierce and mortal fight.

Lords and dukes and noble princes
On thy fatal banks were slain;
Fatal banks that gave to slaughter
All the pride and flower of Spain.

There the hero, brave Alonso,
Full of wounds and glory died;
There the fearless Urdiales
Fell a victim by his side.

Lo! where yonder, Don Saavedra
Through their squadrons slow retires;
Proud Seville, his native city,
Proud Seville his worth admires.

Close behind a renegado
Loudly shouts with taunting cry:
"Yield thee, yield thee, Don Saavedra.
Dost thou from the battle fly?

"Well I know thy aged parents,
Well thy blooming bride I know;
Seven years I was thy captive,
Seven years of pain and woe.

"May our Prophet grant my wishes,
Haughty chief, thou shalt be mine;
Thou shalt drink that cup of sorrow
Which I drank when I was thine."

Like a lion turns the warrior,
Back he sends an angry glare;
Whizzing came the Moorish javelin,
Vainly whizzing through the air.

Back the hero full of fury
Sent a deep and mortal wound;
Instant sank the renegado
Mute and lifeless on the ground.

With a thousand Moors surrounded,
Brave Saavedra stands at bay;
Wearied out but never daunted,
Cold at length the warrior lay.

Near him, fighting, great Alonso
Stout resists the Paynim bands;
From his slaughtered steed dismounted
Firm entrenched behind him stands.

Furious press the hostile squadrons
Furious he repels their rage;
Loss of blood at length enfeebles;
Who can war with thousands wage?

Where yon rock the plain o'shadows
Close behind its foot retired,
Fainting sank the bleeding hero,
And without a groan expired.

(*Thomas Percy*)

THE LAMENTATION FOR CELIN

At the gate of old Granada, when all its bolts are barred,
At twilight, at the Vega-gate, there is a trampling heard;
There is a trampling heard, as of horses treading slow,
And a weeping voice of women, and a heavy sound of woe!—
"What tower is fallen? what star is set; what chief come these bewailing?"
"A tower is fallen! a star is set!—Alas! alas for Celin!"

Three times they knock, three times they cry,—and wide the doors they throw;
Dejectedly they enter, and mournfully they go;
In gloomy lines they mustering stand beneath the hollow porch,
Each horseman grasping in his hand a black and flaming torch;
Wet is each eye as they go by, and all around is wailing,—
For all have heard the misery,—"Alas! alas for Celin!"

Him yesterday a Moor did slay, of Bencerrage's blood,—
'Twas at the solemn jousting,—around the nobles stood;
The nobles of the land were by, and ladies bright and fair
Looked from their latticed windows, the haughty sight to share:
But now the nobles all lament,—the ladies are bewailing,—
For he was Granada's darling knight,—"Alas! alas for Celin!"

Before him ride his vassals, in order two by two,
With ashes on their turbans spread, most pitiful to view;
Behind him his four sisters, each wrapped in sable veil,
Between the tambour's dismal strokes take up their doleful tale;

When ſtops the muffled drum, ye hear their brotherless bewailing,
And all the people, far and near, cry,—"Alas! alas for Celin!"

O, lovely lies he on the bier, above the purple pall,
The flower of all Granada's youth, the loveliеſt of them all!
His dark, dark eyes are closed, his rosy lip is pale,
The cruſt of blood lies black and dim upon his burnished mail;
And evermore the hoarse tambour breaks in upon their wailing,—
Its sound is like no earthly sound,—"Alas! alas for Celin!"

The Moorish maid at the lattice ſtands,—the Moor ſtands at his door;
One maid is wringing of her hands, and one is weeping sore;
Down to the duſt men bow their heads, and ashes black they ſtrew
Upon their broidered garments, of crimson, green, and blue;
Before each gate the bier ſtands ſtill,—then burſts the loud bewailing,
From door and lattice, high and low,—"Alas! alas for Celin!"

An old, old woman cometh forth, when she hears the people cry,—
Her hair is white as silver, like horn her glazed eye;
'Twas she that nursed him at her breaſt,—that nursed him long ago:
She knows not whom they all lament, but soon she well shall know!
With one deep shriek, she through doth break, when her ears receive their wailing,—
"Let me kiss my Celin, ere I die!—Alas! alas for Celin!"

(John Gibson Lockhart)

Gil Vicente

16th century

SONG

If thou art sleeping, maiden,
  Awake and open thy door.
'Tis the break of day, and we must away
  O'er meadow, and mount, and moor.

Wait not to find thy slippers,
  But come with thy naked feet;
We shall have to pass through the dewy grass
  And waters wide and fleet.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Sister Marcela de Carpio de San Felix

16th century

AMOR MYSTICUS

Let them say to my lover
That here I lie!
The thing of His pleasure,—
His slave am I.

Say that I seek Him
Only for love,
And welcome are tortures
My passion to prove.

Love giving gifts
Is suspicious and cold;
I have all, my Beloved
When thee I hold.

Hope and devotion
The good may gain;
I am but worthy
Of passion and pain.

So noble a Lord
None serves in vain,
For the pay of my love
Is my love's sweet pain.

I love Thee, to love Thee,—
No more I desire;
By faith is nourished
My love's strong fire.

I kiss Thy hands
When I feel their blows;
In the place of caresses
Thou givest me woes.

But in Thy chastising
Is joy and peace.
O Master and Love
Let Thy blows not cease.

Thy beauty, Beloved,
With scorn is rife,
But I know that Thou lovest me
Better than life.

And because Thou lovest me,
Lover of mine,
Death can but make me
Utterly Thine.

I die with longing
Thy face to see;
Oh! sweet is the anguish
Of death to me!

(*John Hay*)

Saint Teresa

1515–1582

IF, LORD, THY LOVE FOR ME IS STRONG

If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong
As this which binds me unto Thee,

What holds me from Thee, Lord, so long,
What holds Thee, Lord, so long from me?

O soul, what then desirest thou?
—Lord, I would see Thee, who thus choose Thee.
What fears can yet assail thee now?
—All that I fear is but to lose Thee.

Love's whole possession I entreat,
Lord, make my soul Thine own abode,
And I will build a nest so sweet
It may not be too poor for God.

O soul in God hidden from sin,
What more desires for thee remain,
Save but to love, and love again,
And, all on flame with love within,
Love on, and turn to love again?

(*Arthur Symons*)

LET MINE EYES SEE THEE

Let mine eyes see Thee,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth,
Let mine eyes see Thee,
And then see death.

Let them see that care
Roses and jessamine;
Seeing Thy face most fair
All blossoms are therein,
Flower of seraphim,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth
Let mine eyes see Thee,
And then see death.

Nothing I require
Where my Jesus is;
Anguish all desire,
Saving only this;

All my help is His,
He only succoreth.
Let mine eyes see Thee,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth,
Let mine eyes see Thee,
And then see death.

(*Arthur Symons*)

Luis Vaz de Camoëns

1524–1580

ON THE DEATH OF CATARINA DE ATTAYDA

Those charming eyes within whose starry sphere
Love whilom sat, and smiled the hours away,—
Those braids of light, that shamed the beams of day,—
That hand benignant, and that heart sincere,—
Those virgin cheeks, which did so late appear
Like snow-banks scattered with the blooms of May,
Turned to a little cold and worthless clay,
Are gone, forever gone, and perished here,—

But not unbathed by Memory's warmest tear!
Death thou hast torn, in one unpitying hour,
That fragrant plant, to which, while scarce a flower,
The mellower fruitage of its prime was given;
Love saw the deed,—and as he lingered near
Sighed o'er the ruin, and returned to heaven!

(*R. F. Burton*)

SONNET

Leave me, all sweet refrains my lip hath made;
  Leave me, all instruments attuned for song;
  Leave me, all fountains pleasant meads among;
Leave me, all charms of garden and of glade;
Leave me all melodies the pipe hath played;
  Leave me, all rural feast and sportive throng;
  Leave me, all flocks the reed beguiles along;
Leave me, all shepherds happy in the shade.

Sun, moon and stars, for me no longer glow;
  Night would I have, to wail for vanished peace;
Let me from pole to pole no pleasure know;
  Let all that I have loved and cherished cease;
But see that thou forsake me not, my Woe,
  Who wilt, by killing, finally release.

(*Richard Garnett*)

Luis de Góngora

1561–1627

LET ME GO WARM

Let me go warm and merry still;
And let the world laugh, an' it will.

Let others muse on earthly things,—
The fall of thrones, the fate of kings,
  And those whose fame the world doth fill;
Whilst muffins sit enthroned in trays
And orange-punch in winter sways
The merry scepter of my days;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

He that the royal purple wears
From golden plate a thousand cares
  Doth swallow as a gilded pill:
On feasts like these I turn my back,
Whilst puddings in my roasting-jack
Beside the chimney hiss and crack;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

And when the wintry tempest blows,
And January's sleets and snows
  Are spread o'er every vale and hill,
With one to tell a merry tale
O'er roasted nuts and humming ale,
I sit, and care not for the gale;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

Let merchants traverse seas and lands,
For silver mines and golden sands;
  Whilst I beside some shadowy rill,
Just where its bubbling fountain swells,
Do sit and gather stones and shells,
And hear the tale the blackbird tells;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

For Hero's sake the Grecian lover
The stormy Hellespont swam over:
  I cross, without the fear of ill,
The wooden bridge that slow bestrides
The Madrigal's enchanting sides,
Or barefoot wade through Yepes' tides;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

But since the Fates so cruel prove,
That Pyramus should die of love,
  And love should gentle Thisbe kill;
My Thisbe be an apple-tart,
The sword I plunge into her heart
The tooth that bites the crust apart;—
  And let the world laugh, an' it will.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Lope de Vega

1562–1635

A SONG OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER

From Los Pastores de Belen

As ye go through these palm-trees
O holy angels;
Sith sleepeth my child here
Still ye the branches.

O Bethlehem palm-trees
That move to the anger
Of winds in their fury,
Tempestuous voices,

Make ye no clamor,
Run ye less swiftly,
Sith sleepeth the child here
Still ye your branches.

He the divine child
Is here a-wearied
Of weeping the earth-pain,
Here for his rest would he
Cease from his mourning,
Only a little while,
Sith sleepeth this child here
Stay ye the branches.

Cold be the fierce winds,
Treacherous round him.
Ye see that I have not
Wherewith to guard him,
O angels, divine ones
That pass us a-flying,
Sith sleepeth my child here
Stay ye the branches.

(*Ezra Pound*)

Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas

1580–1645

SONNET: DEATH WARNINGS

I saw the ramparts of my native land,
One time so strong, now dropping in decay,
Their strength destroyed by this new age's way
That has worn out and rotted what was grand.
I went into the fields; there I could see
The sun drink up the waters newly thawed;
And on the hills the moaning cattle pawed,
Their miseries robbed the light of day for me.

I went into my house; I saw how spotted,
Decaying things made that old home their prize;
My withered walking-staff had come to bend.

I felt the age had won; my sword was rotted;
And there was nothing on which to set my eyes
That was not a reminder of the end.

(*John Masefield*)

Pedro Calderon de la Barca

1600–1681

He exceeds all modern dramatists, with the exception of Shakespeare, whom he resembles, however, in the depth of thought and subtlety of imagination of his writings, and in the rare power of interweaving delicate and powerful comic traits with the most tragical situations.—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

THE DREAM CALLED LIFE

A DREAM it was in which I found myself.
And you that hail me now, then hailed me king,
In a brave palace that was all my own,
Within, and all without it, mine; until,
Drunk with excess of majesty and pride,
Methought I towered so big and swelled so wide
That of myself I burst the glittering bubble
Which my ambition had about me blown
And all again was darkness. Such a dream
As this, in which I may be walking now,
Dispensing solemn justice to you shadows,
Who make believe to listen; but anon
Kings, princes, captains, warriors, plume and steel,
Ay, even with all your airy theater,
May flit into the air you seem to rend
With acclamations, leaving me to wake
In the dark tower; or dreaming that I wake
From this that waking is; or this and that,
Both waking and both dreaming; such a doubt
Confounds and clouds our mortal life about.
But whether wake or dreaming, this I know
How dreamwise human glories come and go;
Whose momentary tenure not to break,
Walking as one who knows he soon may wake,
So fairly carry the full cup, so well

Disordered insolence and passion quell,
That there be nothing after to upbraid
Dreamer or doer in the part he played;
Whether to-morrow's dawn shall break the spell,
Or the last trumpet of the Eternal Day,
When dreaming, with the night, shall pass away.

(*Edward FitzGerald*)

FROM "LIFE IS A DREAM"

We live, while we see the sun,
Where life and dreams are as one;
And living has taught me this,
Man dreams the life that is his,
Until his living is done.
The king dreams he is king, and he lives
In the deceit of a king,
Commanding and governing;
And all the praise he receives
Is written in wind, and leaves
A little dust on the way
When death ends all with a breath.
Where then is the gain of a throne,
That shall perish and not be known
In the other dream that is death?
Dreams the rich man of riches and fears,
The fears that his riches breed;
The poor man dreams of his need,
And all his sorrows and tears;
Dreams he that prospers with years
Dreams he that feigns and foregoes,
Dreams he that rails on his foes;
And in all the world, I see,
Man dreams whatever he be,
And his own dream no man knows.
And I too dream and behold,
I dream and I am bound with chains,
And I dreamed that these present pains
Were fortunate ways of old.
What is life? a tale that is told;

What is life? a frenzy extreme,
A shadow of things that seem;
And the greatest good is but small,
That all life is a dream to all,
And that dreams themselves are a dream.

(*Arthur Symons*)

Gustavo Adolfo Becquer

1836–1870

THEY CLOSED HER EYES

They closed her eyes
That were still open;
They hid her face
With a white linen,
And, some sobbing,
Others in silence,
From the sad bedroom
All came away.

The nightlight in a dish
Burned on the floor;
It threw on the wall
The bed's shadow,
And in the shadow
One saw sometime
Drawn in sharp line
The body's shape.

The dawn appeared.
At its first whiteness
With its thousand noises
The town awoke.
Before that contrast
Of light and darkness,
Of life and strangeness
I thought a moment.
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

On the shoulders of men
To church they bore her,
And in a chapel
They left her bier.
Here they surrounded
Her pale body
With yellow candles
And black stuffs.

At the last stroke
Of the ringing for the Souls,
An old crone finished
Her last prayers.
She crossed the narrow nave,
The doors moaned,
And the holy place
Remained deserted.

From a clock one heard
The measured ticking,
And from a candle
The guttering.
All things there
Were so dark and mournful,
So cold and rigid,
That I thought a moment;
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

From the high belfry
The tongue of iron
Clanged, giving out
A last farewell.
Crape on their clothes,
Her friends and kindred
Passed in a line
In homage to her.

In the last vault
Dark and narrow,

The pickaxe opened
A niche at one end;
They laid her away there.
Soon they bricked the place up,
And with a gesture
Bade grief farewell.

Pickaxe on shoulder
The gravedigger,
Singing between his teeth,
Passed out of sight.
The night came down,
It was all silent.
Alone in the darkness
I thought a moment,—
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

In the dark nights
Of bitter winter,
When the wind makes
The rafter creak,
When the violent rain
Lashes the windows,
Lonely I remember
That poor girl.

There falls the rain
With its noise eternal,
There the northwind
Fights with the rain.
Stretched in the hollow
Of the damp bricks,
Perhaps her bones
Freeze with the cold.

Does the dust return to dust?
Does the soul fly to heaven?
Or is all the vile matter,
Rottenness, filthiness?

I know not, but
There is something—something—
Something which gives me
Loathing, terror,—
To leave the dead
So alone, so wretched.

(*John Masefield*)

Antonio Machado

1879–

POEMS

1

A FRAIL sound of a tunic trailing
across the infertile earth,
and the sonorous weeping
of the old bells.

The dying embers
of the horizon smoke.
White ancestral ghosts
go lighting the stars.

—Open the balcony-window. The hour
of illusion draws near. . . .
The afternoon has gone to sleep
and the bells dream.

2

FIGURES in the fields against the sky!
Two slow oxen plow
on a hillside early in autumn,
and between the black heads bent down
under the weight of the yoke,
hangs and sways a basket of reeds,
a child's cradle;
And behind the yoke stride
a man who leans towards the earth

and a woman who, into the open furrows,
throws the seed.
Under a cloud of carmine and flame,
in the liquid green gold of the setting,
their shadows grow monstrous.

(*John Dos Passos*)

Spanish Folk Songs

I

Let the rich man fill his belly;
  Let him fast that has no bread;
And he may sleep in the moon light
  That cannot find a bed.

* * *

If the sea were one great ink-pot
  And the sky of paper made,
The evil that's in women
  Could not all be said.

* * *

If the sea were one great ink-pot
  And of paper all the sky,
It were not enough for telling,
  How deeply men can lie.

* * *

To love with no return
  Is a sad thing to befall;
But a sadder, to come to die
  Before having loved at all.

(*Havelock Ellis*)

FRENCH

From The Provençal

Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!—JOHN KEATES.

Marcabrun

12th century

AT THE FOUNTAIN

A FOUNT there is, doth overfling
Green turf and garden walks; in spring
A glory of white blossoming
Shines underneath its guardian tree;
And new-come birds old music sing;
And there, alone and sorrowing,
I found a maid I could not cheer,—

Of beauty meet to be adored,
The daughter of the castle's lord;
Methought the melody outpour'd
By all the birds unceasingly,
The season sweet, the verdant sward,
Might gladden her, and eke my word
Her grief dismiss, would she but hear.

Her tears into the fountain fell;
With sorry sighs her heart did swell;
"O Jesus, King Invisible!"
She cried,—"of thee is my distress!
Through thy deep wrong bereft I dwell:
Earth's blest have bidden us farewell,
On thee at thine own shrine to wait.

"And my true Love is also gone,
The free, fair, gentle, valiant One;

So what can I but make my moan,
And how the sad desire suppress
That Louis' name were here unknown,
The prayers, the mandates, all undone
Whereby I am made desolate?"

Soon as I heard this plaintive cry,
Moving the limpid wave anigh,
"Weep not, fair maid; so piteously,
Nor waste thy roses!" thus I cried,—
"Neither despair, for He is by
Who brought this leafy greenery,
And He will give thee joy one day."

"Seigneur! I well believe," she said,—
"Of God I shall be comforted
In yonder world when I am dead;
And many a sinful soul beside;—
But now hath He prohibited
My chief delight. I bow my head,—
But heaven is very far away."

(*Harriet Waters Preston*)

Arnaut Daniel

BEL M'ES QUAN LO VENS M'ALENA

Softly sighs the April air,
  Ere the coming of the May;
Of the tranquil night aware,
  Murmur nightingale and jay;
Then, when dewy dawn doth rise,
  Every bird in his own tongue
Wakes his mate with happy cries;
  All their joy abroad is flung.

Gladness, lo! is everywhere
  When the first leaf sees the day;

And shall I alone despair,
  Turning from sweet love away?
Something to my heart replies,
  Thou too wast for rapture strung;
Wherefore else the dreams that rise
  Round thee when the year is young?

One, than Helen yet more fair,
  Loveliest blossom of the May,
Rose-tints hath and sunny hair,
  And a gracious mien and gay;
Heart that scorneth all disguise,
  Lips where pearls of truth are hung,—
God, who gives all sovereignties,
  Knows her like was never sung.

Though she lead through long despair,
  I would never say her nay,
If one kiss—reward how rare!—
  Each new trial might repay.
Swift returns I'd then devise,
  Many labors, but not long.
Following so fair a prize
  I could nevermore go wrong.

(*Harriet Waters Preston*)

Peire Vidal

12th century

SONG OF BREATH

Breathing do I draw that air to me
Which I feel coming from Provença,
All that is thence so pleasureth me
That whenever I heard good speech of it
I listen a-laughing and straightway
Demand for each word an hundred more,
So fair to me is the hearing.

No man hath known such sweet repair
'Twixt Rhone's swift stream and Vensa,

From the shut sea to Durensa,
Nor any place with joys so rare
As among the French folk where
I left my heart a-laughing in her care,
Who turns the veriest sullen unto laughter.

(*Ezra Pound*)

Marie de France

13th century

SONG FROM CHARTIVEL

HATH any loved you well, down there,
  Summer or winter through?
Down there, have you found any fair
  Laid in the grave with you?
Is death's long kiss a richer kiss
  Than mine was wont to be—
Or have you gone to some far bliss
  And quite forgotten me?

What soft enamoring of sleep
  Hath you in some soft way?
What charmed death holdeth you with deep
  Strange lure by night and day?
A little space below the grass,
  Out of the sun and shade;
But worlds away from me, alas,
  Down there where you are laid.

My brightest waved and wasted gold,
  What is it now to thee—
Whether the rose-red life I hold
  Or white death holdeth me?
Down there you love the grave's own green,
  And evermore you rave
Of some sweet seraph you have seen
  Or dreamt of in the grave.

There you shall lie as you have lain,
  Though in the world above,

Another live your life again,
  Loving again your love:
Is it not sweet beneath the palm?
  Is it not warm day rife
With some long mystic golden calm
  Better than love and life?

The broad quaint odorous leaves like hands
  Weaving the fair day through,
Weave sleep no burnished bird withstands,
  While death weaves sleep for you;
And many a strange rich breathing sound
  Ravishes morn and noon:
And in that place you must have found
  Death a delicious swoon—

Hold me no longer for a word
  I used to say or sing:
Ah, long ago you must have heard
  So many a sweeter thing:
For rich earth must have reached your heart
  And turned the faith to flowers;
And warm wind stolen, part by part,
  Your soul through faithless hours.

And many a soft seed must have won
  Soil of some yielding thought,
To bring a bloom up to the sun
  That else had ne'er been brought;
And, doubtless, many a passionate hue
  Hath made that place more fair,
Making some passionate part of you
  Faithless to me down there.

(*Arthur O'Shaughnessy*)

WOULD I MIGHT GO FAR OVER SEA

Would I might go far over sea,
My Love, or high above the air,

And come to land or heaven with thee,
Where no law is, and none shall be.
Against beholding the most rare
Strange beauty that thou hast for me.

Alas, for, in this bitter land,
Full many a written curse doth stand
Against the kiss thy lips should bear;
Against the sweet gift of thy hands;
Against the knowing that thou art fair,
And too fond loving of thy hair.

(*Arthur O'Shaughnessy*)

Charles d'Orleans

1391–1465

SPRING

The year has changed his mantle cold
  Of wind, of rain, of bitter air;
And he goes clad in cloth of gold,
  Of laughing suns and season fair;
No bird or beast of wood or wold
  But doth with cry or song declare
The year lays down his mantle cold.
All founts, all rivers, seaward rolled,
  The pleasant summer livery wear,
  With silver studs on broidered vair;
The world puts off its raiment old,
The year lays down his mantle cold.

(*Andrew Lang*)

ALONS AU BOIS LE MAY CUEILLIR

We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain;
  We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.
The winds of the spring are out at play,
  The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
  Fresh from the footprints of the rain.

The world's too near her end, you say?—
Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain.
It waits for her, the vast Inane?—
Then, girls, to help her on the way
We'll to the woods and gather may.

(*W. E. Henley*)

Anonymous

JOHN OF TOURS

John of Tours is back with peace,
But he comes home ill at ease.

"Good-morrow, mother." "Good-morrow, son,
Your wife has borne you a little one."

"Go now, mother, go before,
Make me a bed upon the floor.

"Very low your feet must fall,
That my wife hear not at all."

As it neared the midnight toll,
John of Tours gives up his soul.

"Tell me now, my mother dear,
What's the crying that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the children wake
Crying with their teeth that ache."

"Tell me, though, my mother dear,
What's the knocking that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the carpenter
Mending planks upon the stair."

"Tell me, too, my mother dear,
What is the singing that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the priests in rows
Going round about our house."

"Tell me then, my mother, my dear,
What's the dress that I should wear?"

"Daughter, any reds or blues,
But the black is most in use."

"Nay, but say, my mother, my dear,
Why do you fall weeping here?"

"Oh, the truth must be said,—
It's that John of Tours is dead."

"Mother, let the sexton know
That the grave must be for two;

"Aye, and still have room to spare,
For you must shut the baby there."

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

BALLADE DE MARGUERITE

I AM weary of lying within the chase
When the knights are meeting in the market-place.

Nay, go not thou to the red-roofed town
Lest the hoofs of the war-horse tread thee down.

But I would not go where the Squires ride,
I would only walk by my Lady's side.

Alack, and alack, thou art overbold,
A Forester's son may not eat of gold.

Will she love me the less that my Father is seen
Each Martinmas day in a doublet green?

Perchance she is sewing at tapestrie;
Spindle and loom are not meet for thee.

Ah, if she is working the arras bright
I might ravel the threads by the fire-light.

Perchance she is hunting of the deer,
How could you follow o'er hill and mere?

Ah, if she is riding with the court,
I might run beside her and wind the morte.

Perchance she is kneeling in St. Denis,
(On her soul may our Lady have gramercy).

Ah, if she is praying in lone chapelle,
I might swing the censer and ring the bell.

Come in, my son, for you look sae pale,
The father shall fill thee a stoup of ale.

But who are these knights in bright array?
Is it a pageant the rich folks play?

'Tis the king of England from over sea,
Who has come unto visit our fair countrie.

But why does the curfew toll sae low?
And why do the mourners walk a-row?

O 'tis Hugh of Amiens, my sister's son,
Who is lying stark, for his day is done.

Nay, nay, for I see white lilies clear;
It is no strong man who lies on the bier.

O 'tis old Dame Jeannette that kept the hall,
I knew she would die at the autumn fall.

Dame Jeannette has not that gold-brown hair,
Old Jeannette was not a maiden fair.

O 'tis none of our kith and none of our kin,
(Her soul may our Lady assoil from sin).

But I hear the boy's voice chaunting sweet,
"Elle est morte, la Marguerite."

Come in, my son, and lie on the bed,
And let the dead folk bury their dead.

O mother, you know I loved her true:
O mother, hath one grave room for two?

(*Oscar Wilde*)

MEDIEVAL NORMAN SONGS

I

Fair is her body, bright her eye,
With smiles her mouth is kind to me;
Then, think no evil, this is she
Whom God hath made my only joy.

Between the earth and heaven high
There is no maid so fair as she;
The beauty of her sweet body
Doth ever fill my heart with joy.

He is a knave, nor do I lie,
Who loveth her not heartily;
The grace that shines from her body
Giveth to lovers all great joy.

II

Sad, lost in thought, and mute I go:
The cause, ah me! you know full well:
But see that nought thereof you tell,
For men will only laugh at woe—
For men will only laugh at woe.

V

I found at daybreak yester morn,
Close by the nest where she was born,
  A tender turtle dove:
  Oha! ohé! ohesa, hesa, hé!

She fluttered, but she could not fly;
I heard, but would not heed her cry:
  She had not learned to love:
    Oha! ohé! ohesa, hesa, hé!

Now she is quiet on my breast,
And from her new and living nest
  She doth not seek to rove:
    Oha! ohé! ohesa, hesa, hé!

VIII

O Love, my love, and perfect bliss!
God in his goodness grant me this—
  I see thee soon again.
Nought else I need to take away
The grief that for thy sake alway
  Doth keep me in great pain.

Alas, I know not what to do,
Nor how to get good news and true:
  Dear God, I pray to Thee;
If else Thou canst not comfort me,
Of Thy great mercy make that he
  Send speedy news to me.

Within my father's garden walls
There is a tree—when April falls
  It blossometh alway.
There wend I oft in winter drear,
Yes, and in spring, the winds to hear,
  The sweet winds at their play.

XII

My love for him shall be
  Fair love and true:
  For he loves me, I know,
And I love him, pardie!

And for I know that he
  Doth love me so,
  I should be all untrue
To love but him, pardie!

XIII

Beneath the branch of the green may
  My merry heart sleeps happily,
  Waiting for him who promised me
To meet me here again this day.

And what is that I would not do
  To please my love so dear to me?
He loves me with leal heart and true,
  And I love him no less, pardie.

Perchance I see him but a day;
  Yet maketh he my heart so free—
  His beauty so rejoiceth me—
That month thereafter I am gay.

XIV

They have said evil of my dear;
Therefore my heart is vexed and drear:
  But what is it to them
If he be fair or foul to see,
Since he is perfect joy to me.

He loves me well: the like do I:
I do not look with half an eye,
  But seek to pleasure him.

From all the rest I choose him here;
I want no other for my dear:
How then should he displease
Those who may leave him if they please?
God keep him from all fear.

XVII

Maid Marjory sits at the castle gate:
With groans and sighs
She weeps and cries:
Her grief it is great.
Her father asks, "Daughter, what is your woe?
Seek you a husband or lord I trow?"
"Let husbands be.
Give my love to me,
Who pines in the dungeon dark below."

'I' faith, my daughter, thou'll long want him;
For he hangs to-morrow when dawn is dim."

'Then bury my corpse at the gallows' feet;
And men will say they were true lovers sweet."

(*John Addington Symonds*)

BALLADS

Le Père Sévère

King Louis on his bridge is he,
He holds his daughter on his knee.

She asks a husband at his hand
That is not worth a rood of land.

"Give up your lover speedily,
Or you within the tower must lie."

"Although I must the prison dree,
I will not change my love for thee.

"I will not change my lover fair,
Not for the mother that me bare.

"I will not change my true lover
For friends or for my father dear."

"Now where are all my pages keen,
And where are all my serving men?

"My daughter must lie in the tower alway,
Where she shall never see the day."

. . . . . .

Seven long years are past and gone
And there has seen her never one.

At ending of the seventh year.
Her father goes to visit her.

"My child, my child, how may you be?"
"O father, it fares ill with me.

"My feet are wasted in the mold,
The worms they gnaw my side so cold."

"My child, change your love speedily
Or you must still in prison lie."

" 'Tis better far the cold to dree
Than give my true love up for thee."

(*Andrew Lang*)

Lost for a Rose's Sake

I laved my hands,
By the water side;
With the willow leaves
My hands I dried.

The nightingale sung
On the bough of the tree;
Sing, sweet nightingale,
It is well with thee.

Thou hast heart's delight,
  I have sad heart's sorrow
For a false, false maid
  That will wed to-morrow.

'Tis all for a rose,
  That I gave her not,
And I would that it grew
  In the garden plot.

And I would the rose-tree
  Were still to set,
That my love Marie
  Might love me yet.

(*Andrew Lang*)

François Villon

1431–1489

No one has ever more skilfully communicated his own disenchantments; no one ever blown a more ear-piercing note of sadness. It is in death that he finds his truest inspiration; in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty; in the strange revolution by which great fortunes and renowns are diminished to a handful of churchyard dust; and in the utter passing away of what was once lovable and mighty.—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

BALLAD OF THE GIBBET

An Epitaph in the form of a ballad that François Villon wrote of himself and his company, they expecting shortly to be hanged.

BROTHERS and men that shall after us be,
  Let not your hearts be hard to us:
For pitying this our misery
  Ye shall find God the more piteous.
  Look on us six that are hanging thus,
And for the flesh that so much we cherished
How it is eaten of birds and perished,
  And ashes and dust fill our bones' place,
Mock not at us that so feeble be,
  But pray God pardon us out of His grace.

Listen we pray you, and look not in scorn,
  Though justly, in sooth, we are cast to die;
Ye wot no man so wise is born
  That keeps his wisdom constantly.
  Be ye then merciful, and cry
To Mary's Son that is piteous,
That his mercy take no stain from us,
  Saving us out of the fiery place.
We are but dead, let no soul deny
  To pray God succor us of His grace.

The rain out of heaven has washed us clean,
  The sun has scorched us black and bare,
Ravens and rooks have pecked at our eyne,
  And feathered their nests with our beards and hair.
  Round are we tossed, and here and there,
This way and that, at the wild wind's will,
Never a moment my body is still;
  Birds they are busy about my face.
Live not as we, not fare as we fare;
  Pray God pardon us out of His grace.

L'envoy

Prince Jesus, Master of all, to thee
We pray Hell gain no mastery,
  That we come never anear that place;
And ye men, make no mockery,
  Pray God, pardon us out of His grace.

(*Andrew Lang*)

RONDEL

Good-by, the tears are in my eyes;
  Farewell, farewell, my prettiest;
  Farewell, of women born the best;
Good-by, the saddest of good-bys.
Farewell, with many vows and sighs
  My sad heart leaves you to your rest;

Farewell, the tears are in my eyes;
Farewell, from you my miseries
  Are more than now may be confessed,
  And most by thee have I been blessed,
Yea, and for thee have wasted sighs;
Good-by, the last of my good-bys.

(*Andrew Lang*)

NO, I AM NOT AS OTHERS ARE

No, I am not, as others are,
Child of the angels, with a wreath
Of planets or of any star.
My father's dead, and lies beneath
The churchyard stone: God rest his breath!
I know that my poor old mother
(And she too knows) must come to death,
And that her son must follow her.

I know that rich and poor and all,
Foolish and wise, and priest and lay,
Mean folk and noble, great and small,
High and low, fair and foul, and they
That wore rich clothing on the way,
Being of whatever stock or stem,
And are coiffed newly every day,
Death shall take every one of them.

Paris and Helen are both dead.
Whoever dies, dies with much pain;
For when his wind and breath are sped
His gall breaks on his heart, and then
He sweats, God knows that sweat of men!
Then shall he pray against his doom
Child, brother, sister, all in vain:
None will be surety in his room.

Death makes him tremble and turn pale,
His veins stretch and his nose fall in,
His flesh grow moist and his neck swell,
Joints and nerves lengthen and wax thin;

Body of woman, that hath been
Soft, tender, precious, smooth and even,
Must thou be spoiled in bone and skin?
Yes, or else go alive to heaven.

(*Arthur Symons*)

THE BALAD OF DEAD LADIES

Tell me now in what hidden way is
  Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
  Neither of them the fairer woman?
  Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
  She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloise, the learned nun,
  For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
  (From Love he won such dule and teen!)
  And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
  Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
  With a voice like any mermaiden,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
  And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
  And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,—
  Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
  Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Save with this much for an overword,—
  But where are the snows of yester-year?

(*D. G. Rossetti*)

BALLAD OF THE LORDS OF OLD TIME

(After the former argument)

WHAT more? Where is the third Calixt,
  Last of that name now dead and gone,
Who held four years the Papalist?
  Alfonso king of Aragon,
  The gracious lord, duke of Bourbon,
And Arthur, duke of old Britaine?
  And Charles the Seventh, that worthy one?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

The Scot too, king of the mount and mist,
  With half his face vermilion,
Men tell us, like an amethyst
  From brow to chin that blazed and shone;
  The Cypriote king of old renown,
Alas! and that good king of Spain,
  Whose name I cannot think upon?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

No more to say of them I list;
  'Tis all but vain, all dead and done:
For death may no man born resist,
  Nor make appeal when death comes on.
  I make yet one more question;
Where's Lancelot, king of far Bohain?
  Where's he whose grandson called him son?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

Where is Guesclin, the good Breton?
  The lord of the eastern mountain-chain,
And the good late duke of Alençon?
  Even with the good knight Charlemain.

(Algernon Charles Swinburne)

BALLAD OF THE WOMEN OF PARIS

ALBEIT the Venice girls get praise
  For their sweet speech and tender air,
And though the old women have wise ways
  Of chaffering for amorous ware,

Yet at my peril dare I swear,
Search Rome, where God's grace mainly tarries,
Florence and Savoy, everywhere,
There's no good girl's lip out of Paris.

The Naples women, as folk prattle,
Are sweetly spoken and subtle enough;
German girls are good at tattle,
And Prussians make their boast thereof;
Take Egypt for the next remove,
Or that waste land the Tartar harries,
Spain or Greece, for the matter of love,
There's no good girl's lip out of Paris.

Breton and Swiss know nought of the matter,
Gascony girls or girls of Toulouse;
Two fishwomen with a half-hour's chatter
Would shut them up by threes and twos;
Calais, Lorraine, and all their crews,
(Names enow the mad song marries,)
England and Picardy, search them and choose,
There's no good girl's lip out of Paris.

Prince, give praise to our French ladies
For the sweet sound their speaking carries;
'Twixt Rome and Cadiz many a maid is,
But no good girl's lip out of Paris.

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne*)

Clement Marot

1495–1544

THE POSY RING

This on thy posy-ring I've writ:
"True Love and Faith"
For, failing Love, Faith droops her head,
And lacking faith, why, love is dead
And's but a wraith.
But Death is stingless where they've lit
And stayed, whose names hereon I've writ.

(*Ford Madox Ford*)

A LOVE-LESSON

A sweet "No! no!" with sweet smile beneath
Becomes an honest girl,—I'd have you learn it;
As for plain, "Yes!" it may be said, i' faith,
Too plainly and too soft,—pray, well discern it!

Not that I'd have my pleasure incomplete,
Or lose the kiss for which my lips beset you;
But that in suffering me to take it, sweet!
I'd have you say—"No! no! I will not let you!"

(*Leigh Hunt*)

MADAME D'ALBERT'S LAUGH

Yes! that fair neck, too beautiful by half,
Those eyes, that voice, that bloom, all do her honor;
Yet, after all, that little giddy laugh
Is what, in my mind, sits the best upon her.

Good God! 'twould make the very streets and ways,
Through which she passes, burst into a pleasure!
Did melancholy come to mar my days
And kill me in the lap of too much leisure,
No spell were wanting, from the dead to raise me,
But only that sweet laugh wherewith she slays me.

(*Leigh Hunt*)

Pierre de Ronsard

1524–1585

FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies,
For more adornment, a full thousand years;
She took their cream of Beauty, fairest dies,
And shaped and tinted her above all Peers:
Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
And underneath their shadow filled her eyes
With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
Of high Olympus uttered slavish sighs.
When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
My heart took fire, and only burning pains,

They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end;
Love poured her beauty into my warm veins.

(*John Keats*)

ROSES

I SEND you here a wreath of blossoms blown,
And woven flowers at sunset gathered,
Another dawn had seen them ruined, and shed
Loose leaves upon the grass at random strown.
By this, their sure example, be it known,
That all your beauties, now in perfect flower,
Shall fade as these, and wither in an hour.
Flowerlike, and brief of days, as the flower sown.

Ah, time is flying, lady,—time is flying;
Nay, 'tis not time that flies but we that go,
Who in short space shall be in churchyard, lying,
And of our loving parley none shall know,
Nor any man consider what we were;
Be therefore kind, my love, whilst thou art fair.

(*Andrew Lang*)

THE ROSE

SEE, Mignonne, hath not the Rose,
That this morning did unclose
Her purple mantle to the light,
Lost before the day be dead,
The glory of her raiment red,
Her color, bright as yours is bright?

Ah, Mignonne, in how few hours
The petals of her purple flowers
All have faded, fallen, died;
Sad Nature, mother ruinous,
That seest thy fair child perish thus
'Twixt matin song and even-tide.

Hear me, my darling, speaking sooth,
Gather the fleet flower of your youth,
Take ye your pleasure at the best;

Be merry ere your beauty flit,
For length of days will tarnish it
Like roses that were loveliest.

(*Andrew Lang*)

OF HIS LADY'S OLD AGE

When you are very old, at evening
You'll sit and spin beside the fire, and say,
Humming my songs, "Ah, well, ah well-a-day.
When I was young, of me did Ronsard sing."
None of your maidens that doth hear the thing,
Albeit with her weary task foredone,
But wakens at my name, and calls you one
Blest, to be held in long remembering.

I shall be low beneath the earth, and laid
On sleep, a phantom in the myrtle shade,
While you beside the fire, a grandame gray,
My love, your pride, remember and regret;
Ah, love me, love, we may be happy yet,
And gather roses, while 'tis called to-day.

(*Andrew Lang*)

HIS LADY'S TOMB

As in the gardens, all through May, the rose,
Lovely, and young, and fair appareled,
Makes sunrise jealous of her rosy red,
When dawn upon the dew of dawning glows;
Graces and Loves within her breast repose,
The woods are faint with the sweet odor shed,
Till rains and heavy suns have smitten dead
The languid flower, and the loose leaves unclose,—

So this, the perfect beauty of our days,
When earth and heaven were vocal of her praise,
The fates have slain, and her sweet soul reposes;
And tears I bring, and sighs, and on her tomb
Pour milk, and scatter buds of many a bloom,
That dead, as living, she may be with roses.

(*Andrew Lang*)

THE PARADOX OF TIME

(*A variation on Ronsard*)

Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, madame!
Las! le temps non: mais "NOUS nous en allons!"

Time goes, you say? Ah, no!
Alas, Time stays, *we* go;
  Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For Youth were always ours?
  Time goes, you say?—ah, no!

Ours is the eyes' deceit
Of men whose flying feet
  Lead through some landscape low;
We pass, and think we see
The earth's fixed surface flee;—
  Alas, Time stays,—we go!

Once in the days of old,
Your locks were curling gold,
  And mine had shamed the crow.
Now, in the self-same stage,
We've reached the silver age;
  Time goes, you say?—ah, no!

Once, when my voice was strong,
I filled the woods with song
  To praise your "rose" and "snow";
My bird, that sang, is dead;
Where are your roses fled?
  Alas, Time stays,—we go!

See, in what traversed ways,
What backward Fate delays
  The hopes we used to know;
Where are your old desires?—
Ah, where those vanished fires?
  Time goes, you say?—ah, no!

How far, how far, O Sweet,
The past behind our feet
  Lies in the even-glow!
Now on the forward way,
Let us fold hands, and pray;
  Alas, Time stays,—*we* go.

(*Austin Dobson*)

Joachim du Bellay

1525–1560

TO HIS FRIEND IN ELYSIUM

So long you wandered on the dusky plain,
Where flit the shadows with their endless cry,
You reach the shore where all the world goes by,
You leave the strife, the slavery, the pain;
But we, but we, the mortals that remain
  In vain stretch hands; for Charon sullenly
Drives us afar, we may not come anigh
Till that last mystic obolus we gain.
But you are happy in the quiet place,
And with the learned lovers of old days,
  And with your love, you wander evermore
In the dim woods, and drink forgetfulness
Of us your friends, a weary crowd that press
  About the gate, or labor at the oar.

(*Andrew Lang*)

A SONNET TO HEAVENLY BEAUTY

If this our little life is but a day
In the Eternal,—if the years in vain
Toil after hours that never come again,—
If everything that hath been must decay,
Why dreamest thou of joys that pass away,
  My soul, that my sad body doth restrain?
  Why of the moment's pleasure art thou fain?
Nay, thou hast wings,—nay, seek another stay.

There is the joy where to each soul aspires,
And there the rest that all the world desires,
  And there is love, and peace, and gracious mirth;
And there in the most highest heavens shalt thou
Behold the Very Beauty, whereof now
  Thou worshipest the shadow upon earth.

(*Andrew Lang*)

ROME

O THOU newcomer who seek'st Rome in Rome
And find'st in Rome no thing thou canst call Roman;
Arches worn old and palaces made common,
Rome's name alone within these walls keeps home.

Behold how pride and ruin can befall
One who hath set the whole world 'neath her laws,
All-conquering, now conquered, because
She is Time's prey and Time consumeth all.

Rome that are Rome's one sole last monument,
Rome that alone hast conquered Rome the town,
Tiber alone, transient and seaward bent,
Remains of Rome. O world, thou unconstant mine.
That which stands firm in thee Time batters down,
And that which fleeteth doth outrun swift time.

(*Ezra Pound*)

Jean de la Fontaine

1621–1695

La Fontaine is the one French poet who speaks to all the world. No one is more truly and variously human than he. We love him, and laugh with him, even at him sometimes, and should like some day to come across him in the Elysian fields.—JOHN BAILEY.

THE COCK AND THE FOX

UPON a tree there mounted guard
  A veteran cock, adroit and cunning;

When to the roots a fox up running
  Spoke thus, in tones of kind regard:—
"Our quarrel, brother, 's at an end;
  Henceforth I hope to live your friend;
    For peace now reigns
    Throughout the animal domains.
  I bear the news. Come down, I pray,
And give me the embrace fraternal;
  And please, my brother, don't delay:
So much the tidings do concern all,
  That I must spread them far to-day.
Now you and yours can take your walks
Without a fear or thought of hawks;
And should you clash with them or others,
In us you'll find the best of brothers;—
    For which you may, this joyful night,
    Your merry bonfires light.
      But, first, let's seal the bliss
      With one fraternal kiss."
"Good friend," the cock replied, "upon my word,
A better thing I never heard;
      And doubly I rejoice
      To hear it from your voice:
And, really, there must be something in it,
  For yonder come two greyhounds, which, I flatter
  Myself, are couriers on this very matter:
They come so fast, they'll be here in a minute.
  I'll down, and all of us will seal the blessing
  With general kissing and caressing."
    "Adieu," said Fox, "my errand's pressing;
    I'll hurry on my way,
      And we'll rejoice some other day."
So off the fellow scampered, quick and light,
To gain the fox-holes of a neighboring height,—
Less happy in his stratagem than flight.
  The cock laughed sweetly in his sleeve;—
  'Tis doubly sweet deceiver to deceive.

(*Elizur Wright*)

THE CROW AND THE FOX

A Crow sat perched upon an oak,
And in his beak he held a cheese.
A Fox snuffed up the savory breeze,
And thus in honeyed accent spoke:
"O Prince of Crows, such grace of mien
Has never in these parts been seen.
If but your song be half as good,
You are the Phœnix of the wood!"
The Crow, beside himself with pleasure,
And eager to display his voice,
Opened his beak, and dropped his treasure.
The Fox was on it in a trice.
"Learn, sir," said he, "that flatterers live
On those who swallow what they say.
A cheese is not too much to give
For such a piece of sound advice."
The Crow, ashamed to have been such easy prey
Swore, but too late, he shouldn't catch him twice.

(*Edward Marsh*)

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière

1622–1673

TO MONSIEUR DE LA MOTHE LE VAYER

(*Upon the death of his son*)

Let thy tears, Le Vayer, let them flow;
None of scant cause thy sorrowing can accuse,
Since, losing that which thou for aye dost lose,
E'en the most wise might find a ground for woe.

Vainly we strive with precepts to forego
The drops of pity that are Pity's dues;
And Nature's self, indignant, doth refuse
To count for fortitude that heartless show.

No grief, alas! can now bring back again
The son too dear, by Death untimely ta'en;

Yet, not the less, his loss is hard to bear,
Graced as he was by all the world reveres,
Large heart, keen wit, a lofty soul and rare,
—Surely these claim eternity of tears!

(*Austin Dobson*)

André Chénier

(1760–1794)

ELEGIES

Every man has his sorrows; yet each still
Hides under a calm forehead his own will.
Each pities but himself. Each in his grief
Envies his neighbor; he too seeks relief;
For one man's pain is of no other known:
They hide their sorrows as he hides his own;
And each, with tears and aching heart, can sigh:
All other men are happy, but not I.
They are unhappy all. They, desolate,
Cry against heaven and bid heaven change their fate.
Their fate is changed; they soon, with fresh tears, know
They have but changed one for another woe.

2

A white nymph wandering in the woods by night
Spies a swift satyr, and pretends a flight;
She runs, and running, feigns to call him back!
The goat-foot, following on her flying track,
Falls down and flounders in the stagnant pool:
Whereat they, while he whimpers, mock the fool.

(*Arthur Symons*)

Pierre Jeane de Beranger

1780–1857

THE KING OF YVETOT

There flourished once a potentate,
Whom history doesn't name;

He rose at ten, retired at eight,
  And snored unknown to fame!
A night-cap for his crown he wore,
  A common cotton thing,
Which Jeanette to his bedside bore,
  This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

With four diurnal banquets he
  His appetite allayed,
And on a jackass leisurely
  His royal progress made.
No cumbrous state his steps would clog,
  Fear to the winds he'd fling;
His single escort was a dog,
  This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

He owned to only one excess,—
  He doted on his glass,—
But when a king gives happiness,
  Why that, you see, will pass!
On every bottle, small or great,
  For which he used to ring,
He laid a tax inordinate,
  This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

Such crowds of pretty girls he found
  Occasion to admire,
It gave his subjects double ground
  For greeting him as Sire!
To shoot for cocoanuts he manned
  His army every spring,
But all conscription sternly banned
  This jolly little king!

Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

He eyed no neighboring domain
  With envy or with greed,
And, like a pattern sovereign,
  Took Pleasure for his creed!
Yet, it was not, if aright I ween,
  Until his life took wing,
His subjects saw that he had been
  A jolly little king.
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

This worthy monarch, readers mine,
  You even now may see
Embellishing a tavern-sign
  Well known to you and me!
There, when the fête-day bottle flows,
  Their bumpers they will bring,
And toast beneath his very nose
  This jolly little king!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
  This jolly little king!

(*William Toynbee*)

Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine

1792–1869

THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

Eagles, that wheel above our crests,
Say to the storms that round us blow,
They can not harm our gnarled breasts,
Firm-rooted as we are below.
Their utmost efforts we defy.
They lift the sea-waves to the sky;
But when they wrestle with our arms
Nervous and gaunt, or lift our hair,
Balanced within its cradle fair
The tiniest bird has no alarms.

Sons of the rock, no mortal hand
Here planted us: God-sown we grew.
We are the diadem green and grand
On Eden's summit that He threw.
When waters in a deluge rose,
Our hollow flanks could well enclose
Awhile the whole of Adam's race;
And children of the Patriarch
Within our forest built the Ark
Of Covenant, foreshadowing grace.

We saw the Tribes as captives led.
We saw them back return anon;
As rafters have our branches dead
Cover'd the porch of Solomon;
And later, when the Word, made man,
Came down in God's salvation-plan
To pay for sin the ransom-price,
The beams that form'd the Cross we gave:
These, red in blood of power to save,
Were altars of that Sacrifice.

In memory of such great events,
Men come to worship our remains;
Kneel down in prayer within our tents,
And kiss our old trunks' weather-stains.
The saint, the poet, and the sage,
Hear and shall hear from age to age
Sounds in our foliage like the voice
Of many waters; in these shades
Their burning words are forged like blades,
While their uplifted souls rejoice.

(*Toru Dutt*)

Alfred de Vigny

1797–1863

THE SOUND OF THE HORN

I LOVE the sound of the horn in the deep, dim woodland,
Whether it wail with the doe that is nigh to death,

Or cry the hunter's farewell on the echoes waning,
From leaf to leaf borne on by the north wind's breath.

How often alone, in the shadow at midnight straying,
I have smiled to hear it, how often have wept still more!
For I seemed to hear the rumor of things foreboding
The death of the Paladin knights that lived of yore.

O azure Mountain! O land that my heart is fain of!
Franzona fells, and summits of Marboré,
Fountains that fall with the drifted snows for a burden
Torrents and brooks of the Pyrenees' chill spray,

Mountains frozen or fertile, throning the seasons,
Who have ice for crown and the meadows about your feet,
'Tis there would I dwell, 'tis there would I wait to hearken
The far-borne sound of the horn blow sad and sweet.

A traveler strayed mayhap when the air is stilly,
Lifts up this brazen voice that the night repeats;
With the sound of his cadenced songs for a while is blending
The tiny bell of the tethered lamb that bleats.

A doe that heareth the sound flies not but rather
Stands still as a stone on the hill-top, while waters chime
In vast uproar with the music for ever calling
From the old romance of the immemorial time.

Souls of the Paladins, say, do your ghosts still haunt us?
Is it you who speaks to us still in the blare of the horn?
Roncevaux! Roncevaux! deep in thy somber valley
The shades of the noble Roland is still forlorn!

(*Wilfrid Thorley*)

NATURE

I AM the stage, impassive, mute and cold,
  That thrills not where the actor's foot hath trod.
My alabaster halls, my emerald
  Stairs, and my tones were sculptured by a god:
Your voice of crying I know not, no, nor see
The passing of the human comedy
  That looks to heaven to find its period.

I roll, and to my deep disdain I thrust
  The seed of ants and human populations;
Their tenements I know not from their dust,
  Their names I know not—I that bear the nations;
Mother in name, in deed a very room
For death; my winter takes its hecatomb,
  My spring is careless of your adorations.

Before you, always essenced, always fair,
  I shook my locks abroad the winds of heaven,
And trod my customary path in air,
  While the divine hands held the balance even.
And onward, to that void where all things roll
I shall be carried silently and sole,
  And by my breast and brows the air be riven.

(*Margaret Jourdain*)

Victor Hugo

1802–1885

A SUNSET

(*From "Feuilles d'Automne"*)

I LOVE the evenings, passionless and fair, I love the evens,
Whether old manor-fronts their ray with golden fulgence leavens,
  In numerous leafage bosomed close;
Whether the mist in reefs of fire extend its reaches sheer,
Or a hundred sunbeams splinter in an azure atmosphere
  On cloudy archipelagos.

Oh, gaze ye on the firmament! a hundred clouds in motion,
Up-piled in the immense sublime beneath the winds' commotion,
  Their unimagined shapes accord:
Under their waves at intervals flame a pale levin through,
As if some giant of the air amid the vapors drew
  A sudden elemental sword.

The sun at bay with splendid thrusts still keeps the sullen fold;
And momently at distance sets, as a cupola of gold,
  The thatched roof of a cot a-glance;
Or on the blurred horizon joins his battle with the haze;
Or pools the blooming fields about with inter-isolate blaze,
  Great moveless meres of radiance.

Then mark you how there hangs athwart the firmament's swept track,
Yonder, a mighty crocodile with vast irradiant back,
  A triple row of pointed teeth?
Under its burnished belly slips a ray of eventide,
The flickerings of a hundred glowing clouds in tenebrous side
  With scales of golden mail ensheathe.

Then mounts a palace, then the air vibrates—the vision flees.
Confounded to its base, the fearful cloudy edifice
  Ruins immense in mounded wrack;
Afar the fragments strew the sky, and each envermeiled cone
Hangeth, peak downward, overhead, like mountains overthrown
  When the earthquake heaves its hugy back.

These vapors, with their leaden, golden, iron, bronzèd glows,
Where the hurricane, the waterspout, thunder, and hell repose,

Muttering hoarse dreams of destined harms,—
'Tis God who hangs their multitude amid the skiey deep,
As a warrior that suspendeth from the roof-tree of his keep
His dreadful and resounding arms!

All vanishes! The Sun, from topmost heaven precipitated,
Like a globe of iron which is tossed back fiery red
Into the furnace stirred to fume,
Shocking the cloudy surges, plashed from its impetuous ire,
Even to the zenith spattereth in a flecking scud of fire
The vaporous and inflamèd spaume.

O contemplate the heavens! Whenas the vein-drawn day dies pale,
In every season, every place, gaze through their every veil?
With love that has not speech for need!
Beneath their solemn beauty is a mystery infinite:
If winter hue them like a pall, or if the summer night
Fantasy them starry brede.

(*Francis Thompson*)

THE GRAVE AND THE ROSE

The Grave said to the Rose,
"What of the dews of dawn,
Love's flower, what end is theirs?"
"And what of spirits flown,
The souls whereon doth close
The tomb's mouth unawares?"
The Rose said to the Grave.

The Rose said, "In the shade
From the dawn's tears is made
A perfume faint and strange,
Amber and honey sweet."
"And all the spirits fleet

Do suffer a sky-change,
More strangely than the dew,
To God's own angels new,"
The Grave said to the Rose.

(*Andrew Lang*)

THE GENESIS OF BUTTERFLIES

The dawn is smiling on the dew that covers
The tearful roses; lo, the little lovers
That kiss the buds, and all the flutterings
In jasmine bloom, and privet, of white wings,
That go and come, and fly, and peep and hide,
With muffled music, murmured far and wide.
Ah, the Spring time, when we think of all the lays
That dreamy lovers send to dreamy mays,
Of the fond hearts within a billet bound,
Of all the soft silk paper that pens wound,
The messages of love that mortals write
Filled with intoxication of delight,
Written in April and before the May time
Shredded and flown, playthings for the wind's playtime,
We dream that all white butterflies above,
Who seek through clouds or waters souls to love,
And leave their lady mistress in despair,
To flit to flowers, as kinder and more fair,
Are but torn love-letters, that through the skies
Flutter, and float, and change to butterflies.

(*Andrew Lang*)

MORE STRONG THAN TIME

Since I have set my lips to your full cup, my sweet,
Since I my pallid face between your hands have laid,
Since I have known your soul, and all the bloom of it,
And all the perfume rare, now buried in the shade;

Since it was given to me to hear one happy while,
The words wherein your heart spoke all its mysteries,
Since I have seen you weep, and since I have seen you smile,
Your lips upon my lips, and your eyes upon my eyes;

Since I have known above my forehead glance and
gleam,
A ray, a single ray, of your ſtar, veiled always,
Since I have felt the fall, upon my lifetime's ſtream,
Of one rose petal plucked from the roses of your days;

I now am bold to say to the swift changing hours,
Pass, pass upon your way, for I grow never old,
Fleet to the dark abysm with all your fading flowers,
One rose that none may pluck, within my heart I hold.

Your flying wings may smite, but they can never spill
The cup fulfilled of love, from which my lips are wet;
My heart has far more fire than you can froſt to chill,
My soul more love than you can make my soul forget.

(*Andrew Lang*)

THE POOR CHILDREN

Take heed of this small child of earth;
He is great; he hath in him God moſt high.
Children before their fleshly birth
Are lights alive in the blue sky.

In our light bitter world of wrong
They come; God gives us them awhile.
His speech is in their ſtammering tongue,
And his forgiveness in their smile.

Their sweet light reſts upon our eyes.
Alas! their right to joy is plain.
If they are hungry Paradise
Weeps, and, if cold, Heaven thrills with pain.

The want that saps their sinless flower
Speaks judgment on sin's miniſters.
Man holds an angel in his power.
Ah! deep in Heaven what thunder ſtirs,

When God seeks out these tender things
Whom in the shadow where we sleep

He sends us clothed about with wings,
  And finds them ragged babes that weep!

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne*)

Gérard de Nerval

1808–1855

AN OLD TUNE

There is an air for which I would disown
  Mozart's, Rossini's, Weber's melodies,—
A sweet sad air that languishes and sighs,
  And keeps its secret charm for me alone.

Whene'er I hear that music vague and old,
  Two hundred years are mist that rolls away;
The thirteenth Louis reigns, and I behold
  A green land golden in the dying day.

An old red castle, strong with stony towers,
  The windows gay with many colored glass;
Wide plains, and rivers flowing among flowers,
  That bathe the castle basement as they pass.

In antique weed, with dark eyes and gold hair,
  A lady looks forth from her window high;
It may be that I knew and found her fair,
  In some forgotten life, long time gone by.

(*Andrew Lang*)

Alfred de Musset

1810–1857

JUANA

Again I see you, ah my queen,
Of all my old loves that have been,
  The first love, and the tenderest;
Do you remember or forget—
Ah me, for I remember yet—
  How the last summer days were blest?

Ah lady, when we think of this,
The foolish hours of youth and bliss,
  How fleet, how sweet, how hard to hold.
How old we are, ere spring be green.
You touch the limit of eighteen
  And I am twenty winters old.

My rose, that mid the red roses,
Was brightest, ah, how pale she is.
  Yet keeps the beauty of her prime;
Child, never Spanish lady's face
Was lovely with so wild a grace;
  Remember the dead summertime.

Think of our loves, our feuds of old,
And how you gave your chain of gold
  To me for a peace offering;
And how all night I lay awake
To touch and kiss it for your sake,—
  To touch and kiss the lifeless thing.

Lady, beware for all we say,
This love shall live another day,
  Awakened from his deathly sleep;
The heart that once has been your shrine
For other loves is too divine;
  A home, my dear, too wide and deep.

What did I say,—why do I dream?
Why should I struggle with the stream
  Whose waves return not any day?
Close heart, and eyes, and arms from me;
Farewell, farewell, so must it be,
  So runs, so runs, the world away.

The season bears upon its wing
The swallows and the songs of spring,
  And days that were, and days that flit;

The loved lost hours are far away;
And hope and fame are scattered spray
For me, that gave you love a day
  For you that not remember it.

(*Andrew Lang*)

Théophile Gautier

1811–1872

ART

All things are doubly fair
If patience fashion them
  And care—
Verse, enamel, marble, gem

No idle chains endure:
Yet, Muse, to walk aright
  Lave tight
Thy buskin proud and sure.

Fie on facile measure,
A shoe where every lout
  At pleasure
Slip his foot in and out!

Sculptor lay by the day
On which thy nerveless finger
  May linger,
Thy thoughts flown far away.

Keep to Carrara rare,
Struggle with Paros cold,
  That hold
The subtle line and fair.

Lest haply nature lose
That proud, that perfect line,
  Make thine
The bronze of Syracuse.

And with a tender dread
Upon an agate's face
    Retrace
Apollo's golden head.

Despise a watery hue
And tints that soon expire.
    With fire
Burn thine enamel true.

Twine, twine in artful wise
The blue-green mermaid's arms,
    Mid charms
Of thousand heraldries.

Show in their triple lobe
Virgin and Child, that hold
    Their globe,
Cross crowned and aureoled.

—All things return to dust
Save beauties fashioned well;
    The bust
Outlasts the citadel.

Oft doth the plowman's heel,
Breaking an ancient clod,
    Reveal
A Cæsar or a god.

The gods, too, die, alas!
But deathless and more strong
    Than brass
Remains the sovereign song.

Chisel and carve and file,
Till thy vague dream imprint
    Its smile
On the unyielding flint.

(*George Santayana*)

CLARIMONDE

With elbow buried in the downy pillow
I've lain and read,
All through the night, a volume strangely written
In tongues long dead.

For at my bedside lie no dainty slippers;
And, save my own,
Under the paling lamp I hear no breathing:—
I am alone!

But there are yellow bruises on my body
And violet stains;
Though no white vampire came with lips blood-crimsoned
To suck my veins!

Now I bethink me of a sweet weird story,
That in the dark
Our dead loves thus with seal of chilly kisses
Our bodies mark.

Gliding beneath the coverings of our couches
They share our rest,
And with their dead lips sign their loving visit
On arm and breast.

Darksome and cold the bed where now she slumbers,
I loved in vain,
With sweet eyelids closed, to be reopened
Never again.

Dead sweetheart, can it be that thou hast lifted
With thy frail hand
Thy coffin-lid, to come to me again
From shadowland?

Thou who, one joyous night, didst, pale and speechless,
Pass from us all,
Dropping thy silken mask and gift of flowers
Amidst the ball?

Oh, fondest of my loves, from that far heaven
Where thou must be,
Hast thou returned to pay the debt of kisses
Thou owest to me?

(*Lafcadio Hearn*)

Charles Baudelaire

1821–1867

In the poetry of Baudelaire there is a deliberate science of sensual and sexual perversity which has something curious in its accentuation of vice with horror, in its passionate devotion to passions. Baudelaire lived and died solitary, secret, a confessor of sins who had never told the whole truth, an ascetic of passion, a hermit of the Brothel.—ARTHUR SYMONS.

LES HIBOUX

UNDER the yew-tree's heavy weight
The owls stand in their sullen fashions,
Like Pagan gods of Pagan passions
They dart their eyes and meditate.
Unmoving they stare with living flame
Until the end of the melancholy
Hour sees the oblique sun set in folly,
And darkness falls in shades of shame.
Their aspect to the wise man teaches
All that he needs, all he beseeches,
Tumult and change and discontent;
The man drunk of a shadow that passes
Keeps always the imperishable scent
That makes the wind change and the grasses.

(*Arthur Symons*)

SOIS SAGE O MA DOULEUR

PEACE, be at peace, O thou my heaviness,
Thou callest for the evening, lo! 'tis here,
The City wears a somber atmosphere
That brings repose to some, to some distress.

Now while the heedless throng make haſte to press
Where pleasure drives them, ruthless charioteer,
To pluck the fruits of sick remorse and fear,
Come thou with me, and leave their fretfulness.

See how they hang from heaven's high balconies,
The old loſt years in faded garments dressed,
And see Regret with faintly smiling mouth;
And while the dying sun sinks in the weſt,
Hear how, far off, Night walks with velvet tread,
And her long robe trails all about the south.

(*Lord Alfred Douglas*)

LA BEAUTÉ

Fair am I, mortals, as a ſtone-carved dream,
And all men wound themselves againſt my breaſt,
The poet's laſt desire, the loveliеſt.
Voiceless, eternal as the world I seem,
In the blue air, ſtrange sphinx, I brood supreme
With heart of snow whiter than swan's white creſt,
No movement mars the plaſtic line—I reſt
With lips untaught to laugh or eyes to ſtream.

Singers who see, in trancèd interludes,
My splendor set with all superb design,
Consume their days, in toilful ecſtasy.
To these revealed, the ſtarry amplitudes
Of my great eyes which make all things divine
Are cryſtal mirrors of eternity.

(*Lord Alfred Douglas*)

HARMONIE DU SOIR

Now is the hour when, swinging in the breeze,
Each flower, like a censer, sheds its sweet.
The air is full of scents and melodies,
O languorous waltz! O swoon of dancing feet!

Each flower, like a censer, sheds its sweet,
The violins are like sad souls that cry,

O languorous waltz! O swoon of dancing feet!
A shrine of Death and Beauty is the sky.

The violins are like sad souls that cry,
Poor souls that hate the vast black night of Death;
A shrine of Death and Beauty is the sky.
Drowned in red blood, the Sun gives up his breath.

This soul that hates the vast black night of Death
Takes all the luminous past back tenderly,
Drowned in red blood, the Sun gives up his breath.
Thine image like a monstrance shines in me.

(*Lord Alfred Douglas*)

Frédéric Mistral

1830–1914

THE COCOONING

(*From the Mirèio*)

When the crop is fair in the olive-yard,
  And the earthen jars are ready
For the golden oil from the barrels poured,
  And the big cart rocks unsteady
With its tower of gathered sheaves, and strains
And groans on its way through fields and lanes:

When brawny and bare as an old athlete
  Comes Bacchus the dance a-leading,
And the laborers all, with juice-dyed feet,
  The vintage of Crau are treading,
And the good wine pours from the brimful presses,
And the ruby foam in the vats increases;

When under the leaves of the Spanish broom
  The clear silk-worms are holden,
An artist each, in a tiny loom,
  Weaving a web of golden,
Fine, frail cells out of sunlight spun,
Where they creep and sleep by the million,—

Glad is Provence on a day like that,
  'Tis the time of jest and laughter:
The Ferigouet and the Baume Muscat
  They quaff, and they sing thereafter.
And lads and lasses, their toils between,
Dance to the tinkling tambourine.

(*Harriet Waters Preston*)

THE LEAF-PICKING

Sing, magnarello, merrily,
  As the green leaves you gather!
In their third sleep the silk-worms lie,
  And lovely is the weather.
Like brown bees that in open glades
  From rosemary gather honey,
The mulberry-trees swarm full of maids,
  Glad as the air is sunny!

Sing, magnarello, merrily,
  The green leaves are piling!
Two comely children sit on high,
  Amid the foliage, smiling.
Sing, magnarello, loud and oft:
  Your merry labor hasten.
The guileless pair who laugh aloft
  Are learning love's first lesson.

Sing, magnarello, merrily,
  As the green leaves you gather!
The sun of May is riding higher,
  And ardent is the weather.

Sing, magnarello, heap your leaves,
  While sunny is the weather!
He comes to aid her when she grieves:
  The two are now together.

(*Harriet Waters Preston*)

Catulle Mendès

1841–1909

I GO BY ROAD

I go by road, I go by street—
    Lira, la, la!
O white high roads, ye know my feet!
A loaf I carry and, all told,
Three broad bits of lucky gold—
    Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, dear nightingale!) is my Sweet.

A poor man met me and begged for bread—
    Lira, la, la!
"Brother, take all the loaf," I said,
I shall but go with lighter cheer—
    Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, sweet nightingale!) is my Dear.

A thief I met on the lonely way—
    Lira, la, la!
He took my gold; I cried to him, "Stay!
And take my pocket and make an end."
    Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, soft nightingale!) is my Friend.

Now on the plain I have met with death—
    Lira, la, la!
My bread is gone, my gold, my breath.
But oh, this heart is not afraid—
    Lira, la, la!
For oh, within this lonely heart
(Sing, sad nightingale!) is my Maid.

(Alice Meynell)

Stéphane Mallarmé

1842–1898

SIGH

My soul, calm sister, towards thy brow, whereon scarce grieves
An autumn strewn already with its russet leaves,
And towards the wandering sky of thine angelic eyes,
Mounts, as in melancholy gardens may arise
Some faithful fountain sighing whitely towards the blue!
Towards the blue, pale and pure, that sad October knew,
When, in those depths, it mirrored languors infinite,
And agonizing leaves upon the waters white,
Windily drifting, traced a furrow cold and dun,
Where, in one long last ray, lingered the yellow sun.

(*Arthur Symons*)

SEA-WIND

The flesh is sad, alas! and all the books are read.
Flight, only flight! I feel that birds are wild to tread
The floor of unknown foam, and to attain the skies!
Nought, neither ancient gardens mirrored in the eyes,
Shall hold this heart that bathes in waters its delight,
O nights! nor yet my waking lamp, whose lonely light
Shadows the vacant paper, whiteness profits best,
Nor the young wife who rocks her baby on her breast.
I will depart! O steamer, swaying rope and spar,
Lift anchor for exotic lands that lie afar!
A weariness, outworn by cruel hopes, still clings
To the last farewell handkerchief's last beckonings!
And are not these, the masts inviting storms, not these
That an awakening wind bends over wrecking seas,
Lost, not a sail, a sail, a flowering isle, ere long?
But, O my heart, hear thou, hear thou, the sailors' song!

(*Arthur Symons*)

José-Maria de Heredia

1842–1905

THE LABORER

Here is the yoke, with arrow and share near by,
The goad, the scythe that in a day hath mown
Swathes that would make the wide barn-flooring groan,
And here the fork the brown haymakers ply.
Too heavy tools! He hath vowed them utterly
  Unto immortal Rhea, who alone
  Brings seed to blossom from hard tilth. His own
Labor is done and he not loth to die.

Fourscore long years, sun-blistered, poor, he drave
  The coulter, without mirth, through stubborn soil,
Who now goes grimly onward to the grave.
    Yet he bewails the labor too long borne,
  And dreads to find more fallow for his toil
    In sunless fields of Erebus forlorn.

(*Wilfrid Thorley*)

Paul Verlaine

1844–1896

He was the purest lyrical singer that France had ever known. He strikes a discreet and troubling note that leaves its vibrations in the heart and in the nerves forever.—Ludwig Lewisohn.

IL PLEUT DOUCEMENT SUR LA VILLE

Tears fall within mine heart,
As rain upon the town:
Whence does this languor start,
Possessing all mine heart?

O sweet fall of the rain
Upon the earth and roof,
Unto an heart in pain,
O music of the rain.

Tears that have no reason
Fall in my sorry heart:
What, there was no treason?
This grief hath no reason.

Nay, the more desolate,
Because, I know not why,
(Neither for love nor hate)
Mine heart is desolate.

(*Ernest Dowson*)

SPLEEN

Around were all the roses red,
The ivy all around was black.

Dear, so thou only move thine head,
Shall all mine old despairs awake.

Too blue, too tender was the sky,
The air too soft, too green the sea.

Always I fear, I know not why,
Some lamentable flight from thee.

I am so tired of holly-sprays
And weary of the bright box-tree,

Of all the endless country ways;
Of everything, alas, save thee.

(*Ernest Dowson*)

THE SKY IS UP ABOVE THE ROOF

The sky is up above the roof
  So blue, so soft.
A tree there, up above the roof,
  Swayeth aloft.

A bell within that sky we see,
  Chimes low and faint;
A bird upon that tree we see,
  Maketh complaint.

Dear God, is not the life up there
  Simple and sweet?
How peacefully are borne up there
  Sounds of the street.

What hast thou done, who comest here,
  To weep alway?
Where hast thou laid, who comest here,
  Thy youth away?

(*Ernest Dowson*)

A CLYMENE

Mystical strains unheard,
A song without a word,
Dearest, because thine eyes,
Pale as the skies,

Because thy voice, remote
As the far clouds that float
Veiling for me the whole
Heaven of the soul,

Because the stately scent
Of thy swan's whiteness, blent
With the white lily's bloom
Of thy perfume,

Ah, because thy dear love,
The music breathed above
By angels halo-crowned,
Odor and sound,

Hath, in my subtle heart,
With some mysterious art
Transposed thy harmony,
So let it be.

(*Arthur Symons*)

PANTOMIME

Pierrot, no sentimental swain,
Washes a pâté down again
  With furtive flagons, white and red.

Cassandre, to chasten his content,
Greets with a tear of sentiment
  His nephew disinherited.

That blackguard of a Harlequin
Pirouettes, and plots to win
  His Colombine that flits and flies.

Colombine dreams, and starts to find
A sad heart sighing in the wind,
  And in her heart a voice that sighs.

(*Arthur Symons*)

MANDOLINE

(*Fêtes Galantes*)

The singers of serenades
  Whisper their faded vows
Unto fair listening maids
  Under the singing boughs.

Tircis, Aminte, are there,
  Clitandre has waited long,
And Damis for many a fair
  Tyrant makes many a song.

Their short vests, silken and bright,
  Their long pale silken trains,
Their elegance of delight,
  Twine soft blue silken chains.

And the madolines and they,
  Faintlier breathing, swoon
Into the rose and gray
  Ecstasy of the moon.

(*Arthur Symons*)

CHANSONS D'AUTOMNE

(*From Poèmes Saturniens*)

When a sighing begins
In the violins
Of the autumn-song,

My heart is drowned
In the slow sound
Languorous and long.

Pale as with pain,
Breath fails me when
The hour tolls deep.
My thoughts recover
The days that are over,
And I weep.

And I go
Where the winds know,
Broken and brief,
To and fro,
As the winds blow
A dead leaf.

(*Arthur Symons*)

FEMME ET CHATTE

(*From Poèmes Saturniens*)

They were at play, she and her cat,
And it was marvelous to mark
The white paw and the white hand pat
Each other in the deepening dark.

The stealthy little lady hid
Under her mittens' silken sheath
Her deadly agate nails that thrid
The silk-like dagger-points of death.

The cat purred primly and drew in
Her claws that were of steel filed thin:
The devil was in it all the same.
The devil was in it all the same.

And in the boudoir, while a shout
Of laughter in the air rang out,
Four sparks of phosphor shone like flame.

(*Arthur Symons*)

FROM SAGESSE

Slumber dark and deep
Falls across my life;
I will put to sleep
Hope, desire and strife.

All things pass away,
Good and evil seem
To my soul to-day
Nothing but a dream;

I a cradle laid
In a hollow cave,
By a great hand swayed:
Silence, like the grave.

(*Arthur Symons*)

Arthur Rimbaud

1854–1891

SENSATION

On summer evenings blue, pricked by the wheat
  On rustic paths the thin grass I shall tread,
And feel its freshness underneath my feet,
  And, dreaming, let the wind bathe my bare head.

I shall not speak, nor think, but, walking slow
  Through Nature, I shall rove with Love my guide,
As gypsies wander, where, they do not know,
  Happy as one walks by a woman's side.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

THE SLEEPER OF THE VALLEY

There's a green hollow where a river sings
Silvering the torn grass in its glittering flight,
And where the sun from the proud mountain flings
Fire—and the little valley brims with light.

A soldier young, with open mouth, bare head,
Sleeps with his neck in dewy water cress,
Under the sky and on the grass his bed,
Pale in the deep green and the light's excess.

He sleeps amid the iris and his smile
Is like a sick child's slumbering for a while.
Nature, in thy warm lap his chilled limbs hide!

The perfume does not thrill him from his rest.
He sleeps in sunshine, hand upon his breast,
Tranquil—with two red holes in his right side.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

SONG OF THE HIGHEST TOWER

May they come, may they come,
The days which enchant us.

I have been so long resigned
That I forgot it all.
Fears and sufferings
To the skies are gone,
And the unclean thirst
Darkens my veins.

May they come, may they come,
The days which enchant us.

Like the meadows
Left to ruin,
Spreading and overgrown
With flowers and weeds,
In the angry humming
Of filthy flies.

May they come, may they come
The days which enchant us.

(*Edgell Rickword*)

Emile Verhaeren

1855–1916

THE POOR

With hearts of poor men it is so:
That they are full of tears that flow,
That they are pale as head-stones white
In the moon light.

And so with poor men's backs it is—
More bent with heavy miseries
Than sagging roofs of brown huts be
Beside the sea.

And it is so with poor men's hands,
Like leaves along autumnal lands,
Leaves that lie sere and dead and late
Beside the gate.

And it is so with poor men's eyes,
Humble and in all sorrow wise,
And like the cattle's, sad and dumb,
When the storms come.

Oh, it is so with the poor folk
That under misery's iron yoke
Have gestures weary and resigned
On earth's far plains of sun and wind.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

FROM SUMMER HOURS

Flower petals fall.
  Dull flares the torch's mane;
  Mine eyes to weep were fain,
Mine eyes possess thee all.

Yielded beyond recall,
  Heart, naught shall heal thee again,
  O clay molded into pain . . .
Flower petals fall.

The roses all are dying . . .
I am saying nothing, thou hearest
Under thy motionless hair.

Love is heavy. My soul is sighing . . .
What wing brushes both of us, dearest,
In the sick and soundless air?

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Maurice Maeterlinck

1862–

SONG

Three little maidens they have slain,
To find out what their hearts contain.

The first of them was brimmed with bliss,
  And everywhere her blood was shed,
For full three years three serpents hiss.

The second full of kindness sweet,
  And everywhere her blood was shed,
Three lambs three years have grass to eat.

The third was full of pain and rue,
  And everywhere her blood was shed,
Three seraphim watch three years through.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

THE LAST WORDS

And if he ever should come back,
  What am I to say?
—Tell him that I watch'd for him
  All my life away.

And if he should ask me more,
  Nor know my face again?
—Speak gently as a sister speaks,
  He may be in pain.

If he ask me where you are,
  How shall I reply?
—Then give him my golden ring,
  Very silently.

And if he should want to know
  Why the hall stands bare?
—Then show him the burn-out lamp
  And the door ajar.

And if he should ask me then
  How you fell asleep?
—Tell him that I smiled and died.
  Do not let him weep.

(*Frederick York Powell*)

Henri de Regnier

1864–

NIGHT

An odorous shade lingers the fair day's ghost,
  And the frail moon now by no wind is tost,
And shadow-laden scents of tree and grass
  Build up again a world our eyes have lost.

Now all the wood is but a murmured light
  Where leaf on leaf falls softly from the height;
The hidden freshness of the river seems
  A breath that mingles with the breath of night.

And time and shade and silence seem to say,
  Close now your eyes nor fear to die with day;
For if the daylight win to earth again,
  Will not its beauty also find a way?

And flower and ſtream and foreſt, will they not
Bring back to-morrow, as to-day they brought,
This shadow-hidden scent—this odorous shade?
Yea, and with more abiding memories fraught.

(*Seumas O'Sullivan*)

JE NE VEUX DE PERSONNE AUPRES DE MA TRISTESSE

Say, sweet, my grief and I, we may not brook
Even your light footfall, even your shy look,
Even your light hand that touches carelessly
The faded ribbon in the closed-up book.

Let be; my door is closed for this one day,
Nor may morn's freshness through my window ſtray;
My heart is a gueſt-chamber, and awaits
Sorrow, a sweet shy gueſt from far away.

Shyly it comes from its far diſtant home,
O keep a silence leſt its voice be dumb;
For every man that lives and laughs and loves
Muſt hear that whisper when his hour has come.

(*Seumas O'Sullivan*)

André Spire

1868–

LONELY

They pity me.
"Look at him, see.
Taking his walking ſtick, and going out. So lonely.
He flees us. Look at his ſtrange eyes.
Not even a book does he take with him. Only
His ſtick. What does he mean to do?
Is he intent on evil? In revolt? Or fever-sick?"

Alone, O beautiful white road,
Between your ditches full of grass and flowers,
Over your pebbles telling tales of old,

Alone, O forest, with the blue bark of your pines;
And with your wind that parleys with your trees;
And with your ants processioning that drag
Bodies of little beetles on their backs.

Alone, with you, you sun-drenched fields,
All full of cries, and noises, and heads raised alert,
Alone with you, flies, merlins, buzzards, kites,
Rocks, brambles, sources, crevices,
Fogs, clouds, mists, cones, peaks, precipices,
Heat, odor, order, chaos, and disorder,
Among the dialogues your rival mouths
Exchange for ever!
Alone with my stick, alone with my fatigue,
My dust, my throbbing temples, and my dizziness,
And the proud sweat glued to my skin.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Francis Jammes

1868–

AMSTERDAM

The pointed houses lean so you would swear
That they were falling. Tangled vessel masts
Like leafless branches lean against the sky
Amid a mass of green, and red, and rust,
Red herrings, sheepskins, coal along the quays.

Robinson Crusoe passed through Amsterdam,
(At least I think he did), when he returned
From the green isle shaded with cocoa-trees.

What were the feeling of his heart before
These heavy knockers and these mighty doors! . . .

Did he look through the window-panes and watch
The clerks who write in ledgers all day long?
Did tears come in his eyes when he remembered
His parrot, and the heavy parasol
Which shaded him in the sad and clement isle?

"Glory to thee, good Lord," he would exclaim,
Looking at chests with tulip-painted lids.
But, saddened by the joy of the return,
He must have mourned his kid left in the vines
Alone, and haply on the island dead.

I have imagined this before the shops
Which make you think of Jews who handle scales,
With bony fingers knotted with green rings.
See! Amsterdam under a shroud of snow
Sleeps in a scent of fog and bitter coal.

Last night the white globes of the lighted inns,
Whence issue heavy women's whistled calls,
Were hanging down like fruits resembling gourds.
Posters blue, red, and green shone on their walls.
The bitter pricking of their sugared beer
Rasped on my tongue and gave my nose the itch.

And in the Jewry where detritus lies,
You smell the raw, cold reek of fresh-caught fish.
The slippery flags are strown with orange-peel.
Some swollen face would open staring eyes,
A wrangling arm moved onions to and fro.

Rebecca, from your little tables you
Were selling sticky sweets, a scanty show. . . .
The sky seemed pouring, like a filthy sea,
A tide of vapor into the canals.
Smoke that one does not see, commercial calm
Rose from the husked roofs and rich table-cloths,
And from the houses' comfort India breathed.

Fain had I been one of those merchant princes,
Who sailed in olden days from Amsterdam
To China, handing over their estate
And home affairs to trusty mandatories.
Like Robinson before a notary
I would have signed my pompous procuration.

Then honesty had piled from day to day
My riches more, and flowered them like a moon-beam
Upon my laden ships' imposing prows.
And in my house the nabobs of Bombay
Would have been tempted by my florid spouse.

The Mogul would have sent a gold-ringed negro
To traffic, with a smiling row of teeth,
Under his spreading parasol. And he
Would have enchanted with his savage tales
My eldest girl, to whom he would have given
A robe of rubies cut by cunning slaves.

I should have had my family portrayed
By some poor wretch whose paintings lived and breathed:
My plump and sumptuous wife with rosy face,
My sons, whose beauty would have charmed the town,
My daughters, with their pure and different grace.

And so to-day, instead of being myself,
I should have been another, visiting
A pompous mansion of old Amsterdam,
Launching my soul before the plain devise,
Under a gable: Here lived Francis Jammes.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

PRAYER TO GO TO PARADISE WITH THE ASSES

O God, when You send for me, let it be
Upon some festal day of dusty roads.
I wish, as I did ever here-below
By any road that pleases me, to go
To Paradise, where stars shine all day long.
Taking my stick out on the great highway,
To my dear friends the asses I shall say:
I am Francis Jammes going to Paradise,
For there is no hell where the Lord God dwells.
Come with me, my sweet friends of azure skies,
You poor, dear beasts who whisk off with your ears
Mosquitoes, peevish blows, and buzzing bees . . .

Let me appear before You with these beasts,
Whom I so love because they bow their head
Sweetly, and halting join their little feet
So gently that it makes you pity them.
Let me come followed by their million ears,
By those that carried panniers on their flanks,
And those that dragged the cars of acrobats,
Those that had battered cans upon their backs,
She-asses limping, full as leather-bottles,
And those too that they breech because of blue
And oozing wounds round which the stubborn flies
Gather in swarms. God, let me come to You
With all these asses into Paradise.
Let angels lead us where your rivers soothe
Their tufted banks, and cherries tremble, smooth
As is the laughing flesh of tender maids.
And let me, where Your perfect peace pervades,
Be like Your asses, bending down above
The heavenly waters through eternity,
To mirror their sweet, humble poverty
In the clear waters of eternal love.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

THE CHILD READS AN ALMANAC

The child reads on; her basket of eggs stands by.
She sees the weather signs, the Saints with awe,
And watches the fair houses of the sky:
The *Goat,* the *Bull,* the *Ram,* et cetera.

And so the little peasant maiden knows
That in the constellations we behold,
Are markets like the one to which she goes
Where goats and bulls and rams are bought and sold.

She reads about the market in the sky.
She turns a page and sees the *Scales* and then
Says that in Heaven, as at the grocery,
They weigh salt, coffee and the souls of men.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Paul Fort

1872–

BALLADE

The pretty maid she died, she died, in love-bed as she lay;
They took her to the churchyard, all at the break of day;
They laid her all alone there, all in her white array;
They laid her all alone there, a-coffined in the clay;
And they came back so merrily, all at the dawn of day;
A-singing, all so merrily, *"The dog must have his day!"*
The pretty maid is dead, is dead, in love-bed as she lay;
And they went off a-field to work, as they do every day.

(*Frederick York Powell*)

Paul Valéry

1872–

HELEN, THE SAD QUEEN

Azure, I come! from the caves of death withdrawn
To hear the waves break rhythmic on the shores,
To see swift galleys clear, across the dawn,
Lifting from darkness on the blades of golden oars.

My lonely hands now summon forth the kings
Whose salt-gray beards amuse my chaste fingers. . . .
I wept. . . . And each his gloomy triumph sings
And behind the stern of his bark the furrow lingers.

I hear sonorous conchs and clarion calls
Marking the lift of the oars and their even falls.
The clear chant of the undulant oarsmen charms
The tumult; and the gods! heroic at the prow,
With their olden smile and the spray hurled at their brow,
Stretch toward me their indulgent, graven arms.

(*Joseph T. Shipley*)

Charles Vildrac

1882–

AFTER MIDNIGHT

It is at morning, twilight they expire;
Death takes in hand, when midnight sounds,
Millions of bodies in their beds,
And scarcely anybody thinks of it. . . .

O men and women, you
About to die at break of day,
I see your hands' uneasy multitude,
Which now the blood deserts for ever!

White people in the throes of death,
Wrestling in all the world to-night,
And whom the weeping dawn will silence,
Fearful I hear your gasping breath!
How many of you there are dying!
How can so many other folks be lying
Asleep upon the shore of your death-rattles!

. . . Here is noise in the house;
I am not the only one who hears you:
Some one has stepped about a room,
Some one has risen to watch over you.

But no! It is a little song I hear.
If some one stepped about a room,
It was to go and rock a little child,
Who has been born this evening in the house.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Jules Romains

1885–

ANOTHER SPIRIT ADVANCES

What is it so transforms the boulevard?
The lure of the passersby is not of the flesh;

There are no movements; there are flowing rhythms
And I have no need of eyes to see them there.
The air I breathe is fresh with spirit-savor.
Men are ideas that a mind sends forth.
From them to me all flows, yet is internal;
Cheek to cheek we lie across the distance,
Space in communion binds us in one thought.

(*Joseph T. Shipley*)

GERMAN

From the Minnesingers

It is a bright, animated, eventful age which we find reflected in the literature of the Minnesingers; not trivial, for the stern premonition of coming struggle is felt; frank, artless, and natural; original, because reaped on fresh fields, by fresh hands; and with a direct impress of Nature, which we find for the first time in any literature.—BAYARD TAYLOR.

Sir Heinrich von Rugge

12th century

HE THAT LOVES A ROSY CHEEK

ASK not overmuch for fair
Form and face: let women be
Good: beauty is but a snare:
Gladly woo, if good is she.

After the strewn leaves of roses
Richer the rich mind uncloses.
Boorish is he, and unwise,
Who judges women by the eyes.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Sir Reinmar von Hagenau

12th century

A CHILDISH GAME

LONG as I can call to mind,
Never was so much of ill.
In the world you shall not find
One who does attain his will.
So it was, and is alas!
Grief did ever hearts harass.
Joy and sorrow both shall pass.
He whose passion is misprized

Vainly suffers agony.
Where's the gain, to be despised?—
Only sorrow's usury.
This is all that I have got.
She I loved so well hath not
Deigned assuage my cruel lot.
"Constancy is lovers' aid."—
This is but a juggler's tale.
Since on her my eyes first strayed,
Never did my service fail.
From that service I depart.—
No, I cannot rend my heart.—
Love, a childish game thou art!

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Sir Walther von der Vogelweide

13th century

AWAKE!

Awake! The day is coming now
That brings the sweat of anguish to the brow
Of Christians, Jews, and Pagans all!
Many a token in the sky
And on the earth shows it is nigh:
Foretold in Holy Writ withal.
The sun no longer shows
His face; and treason sows
His secret seeds that no man can detect;
Fathers by their children are undone;
The brother would the brother cheat;
And the cowled monk is a deceit,
Who should the way to Heaven direct;
Might is right, and justice there is none.
Arise! we slept, nor of the peril recked.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

WITH A ROD NO MAN ALIVE

With a rod no man alive
Goodness in a child can drive:

Whom you may to honor bring
As a blow a word will sting.
As a blow a word will sting
Whom you may to honor bring:
Goodness in a child can drive
With a rod no man alive.
  Have a good care of your tongue,
Guarded speech beseems the young;
Shoot the bolt the door behind,
Lock within the words unkind.
Lock within the words unkind,
Shoot the bolt the door behind;
Guarded speech beseems the young,
Have a good care of your tongue.
  Have a good care of your eyes,
They were never meant for spies:
Noble manners let them mind,
Be they to ignoble blind.
Be they to ignoble blind,
Noble manners let them mind:
They were never meant for spies,
Have a good care of your eyes.
  Have a good care of your ears,
Foolish is who all things hears:
Evil speech if they admit,
You will be defiled by it.
You will be defiled by it,
Evil speech if they admit;
Foolish is who all things hears,
Have a good care of your ears.
  Have good care of all the three,
They are often all too free:
Tongue and eyes and ears are bent
On delight and devilment.
On delight and devilment.
Tongue and eyes and ears are bent:
They are often all too free,
Have good care of all the three.

(Jethro Bithell)

Sir Wolfram von Eschenbach

13th century

HIS OWN TRUE WIFE

Hidden lovers' woes
Thou wast wont to sing ere dawn arose:
Bitter parting after raptured meetings.
Whosoever love and lady's greeting
So received that he was torn
From her breast by fear of men,
Thou wouldst sing him counsel, when
Shone the star of morn.
Warder, sing it now no more, lay by thy bugle-horn!
He to whom is given
Not to be from love by morning riven—
Whom the watchers think not to beleaguer,
Hath no need to be alert and eager
To avert the peril rife
In the day: his rest is pure,
Not a warder makes secure
His unhappy life.
Love so sweet bestows in all men's sight his own true wife!

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Sir Neidhart von Reuental

13th century

ON THE MOUNTAIN

On the mountain, in the valley,
Singing birds again do rally;
Now is seen
Clover green;
Winter, take away thy teen!
Trees that erst were gray to view
Now their verdant robes renew;
In their shade
Nests are made;
Thence the toll of May is paid.

Fought an aged wife for breath
Day and night, and baffled death;
Now she rushes
Like a ram about, and pushes
All the young ones into the bushes.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Sir Ulrich von Liechtenstein

13th century

LOVE, WHOSE MONTH WAS EVER MAY

When with May the air is sweet
When the forest fair is clad,
All that have a love to meet
Pair in pleasure, lass and lad.
Merrily arm in arm they go,
For the time will have it so.
Love and love, when linked together,
Love goes with to keep them gay:
All the three, this sunshine weather,
They are making holiday.
Sorrow cannot come between
Hearts where Love and May are seen.
Where to love sweet love is plighted,
Constant and with all the soul,
And the pair are so united
That their love is sound and whole:
God shall make them man and wife
For the bliss of all their life.
He that finds a constant heart,
Constant love, and constant mind,
All his sorrows shall depart.
Love, when constant, is so kind
That it makes a constant breast
Evermore content and blest.
Could I find affection true,
So sincere should be mine own:
We should conquer, being two,
Care I cannot kill alone.

Constant love is all my care:
Love inconstant I forbear.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Anonymous

16th century

WESTPHALIAN SONG

When thou to my true-love com'st
  Greet her from me kindly;
When she asks thee how I fare?
  Say, folks in Heaven fare finely.

When she asks, "What! Is he sick?"
  Say, dead!—and when for sorrow
She begins to sob and cry,
  Say, I come to-morrow.

(*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*)

Johann Gottfried von Herder

1744–1803

SIR OLAF

Sir Olaf he rideth west and east
To bid the folk to his bridal feast.

On the wold are dancing an elvish band,
An Erl-king's daughter proffers her hand.

"Now welcome, Sir Olaf: what haste's with thee?
Step into our circle and dance with me."

"To dance I neither will nor may,
To-morrow's dawn is my bridal-day."

"Nay, stay, Sir Olaf, and dance with me,
And golden spurs will I give to thee."

"To dance I neither will nor may,
To-morrow's dawn is my bridal-day."

"Nay, stay, Sir Olaf, and dance with me,
A heap of gold will I give to thee."

"For all thy gold I will not stay,
And dance I neither will nor may."

"If thou wilt not dance, Sir Olaf, with me,
Then Pest and Sickness shall follow thee."

She touched Sir Olaf upon the heart—
Ne'er in his life had he felt such smart.

She lifted him up on his steed that tide,
"Ride home! ride fast to thy troth-plight bride!"

And when he came to his castle-door,
His mother stood there, and trembled sore.

"Now say, sweet son, right speedilie
Why art thou wan, and white of blee?"

"Well may my face be wan and white.
I was in Erl-king's realm last night."

"Now tell me, my son so true and tried,
What thing shall I say to thy plighted bride?"

"Say that I hunt in the good greenwood,
With hound and horse as a good knight should."

When scarce the dawn in heaven shone red,
Came the train with the bride Sir Olaf should wed.

They sat at meat, they sat at wine;
"Now where is Sir Olaf, bridegroom of mine?"

"Sir Olaf rode out to the greenwood free,
With horse and hound to the hunt rode he."

The bride she lifted a cloth of red:
Beneath, Sir Olaf was lying dead.

(*Elizabeth Craigmyle*)

ESTHONIAN BRIDAL SONG

Deck thyself, maiden,
With the hood of thy mother;
Put on the ribands
Which thy mother once wore:
On thy head the band of duty,
On thy forehead the band of care.
Sit in the seat of thy mother,
And walk in thy mother's footsteps.
And weep not, weep not, maiden:
If thou weepest in thy bridal attire,
Thou wilt weep all thy life.

(*W. Taylor*)

Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty

1748–1776

HARVEST SONG

Sickles sound;
On the ground
Fast the ripe ears fall;
Every maiden's bonnet
Has blue blossoms on it;
Joy is over all.

Sickles ring,
Maidens sing
To the sickle's sound;
Till the moon is beaming,
And the stubble gleaming,
Harvest songs go round.

All are springing,
All are singing,
Every lisping thing.
Man and master meet;
From one dish they eat;
Each is now a king.

Hans and Michael
Whet the sickle,
Piping merrily.
Now they mow; each maiden
Soon with sheaves is laden,
Busy as a bee.

Now the blisses,
And the kisses!
Now the wit doth flow
Till the beer is out;
Then, with song and shout,
Home they go, yo ho!

(*Charles T. Brooks*)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

1749–1832

Perennial, as a possession for ever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-voiced "Melody of Wisdom" which he that has ears may hear.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

THE ERL-KING

O WHO rides by night thro the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm.
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

"O father, see yonder! see yonder!" he says;
"My boy, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?"
"O, 'tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud."
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

(*The Erl-King speaks*)

"O come and go with me, thou loveliest child;
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"O father, my father, and did you not hear
The Erl-King whisper so low in my ear?"
"Be still, my heart's darling—my child, be at ease;
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro' the trees."

Erl-King

"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"O father, my father, and saw you not plain
The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?"
"O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the gray willow that danced to the moon."

Erl-King

"O come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away."
"O father, O father! now, now, keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me—his grasp is so cold!"

Sore trembled the father; he spurr'd thro' the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasp'd to his bosom, the infant was dead.

(*Sir Walter Scott*)

WANDERER'S NIGHT-SONGS

I

Thou that from the heavens art,
Every pain and sorrow stillest,
And the doubly wretched heart
Doubly with refreshment fillest,

I am weary with contending!
Why this rapture and unrest?
Peace descending
Come, ah, come into my breast!

II

O'er all the hill-tops
Is quiet now,
In all the tree-tops
Hearest thou
Hardly a breath;
The birds are asleep in the trees:
Wait; soon like these
Thou too shalt rest.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

THE ROSE

Once a boy beheld a bright
  Rose in dingle growing;
Far, far off it pleased his sight;
Near he viewed it with delight:
  Soft it seemed and glowing.
Lo! the rose, the rose so bright,
  Rose so brightly blowing!

Spake the boy, "I'll pluck thee, grand
  Rose all wildly blowing."
Spake the rose, "I'll wound thy hand,
Thus the scheme thy wit hath planned
  Deftly overthrowing."
O! the rose, the rose so grand,
  Rose so grandly glowing.

But the stripling plucked the red
  Rose in glory growing,
And the thorn his flesh hath bled,
And the rose's pride is fled,
  And her beauty's going.
Woe! the rose, the rose once red
  Rose once redly glowing.

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

THE KING OF THULÉ

Oh! true was his heart while he breathèd
  That King over Thulé of old,
So she that adored him bequeathèd
  Him, dying, a beaker of gold.

At banquet and supper for years has
  He brimmingly filled it up,
His eyes overflowing with tears as
  He drank from that beaker-cup.

When Death came to wither his pleasures
  He parceled his cities wide,
His castles, his lands, and his treasures,
  But the beaker he laid aside.

They drank the red wine from the chalice.
  His barons and marshals brave;
The monarch sat in his rock-palace
  Above the white foam of the wave.

And now, growing weaker and weaker
  He quaffed his last Welcome to Death,
And hurled the golden beaker
  Down into the flood beneath.

He saw it winking and sinking,
  And drinking the foam so hoar;
The light from his eyes was shrinking,
  Nor drop did he ever drink more.

(James Clarence Mangan)

A VOICE FROM THE INVISIBLE WORLD

High o'er his moldering castle walls
  The warrior's phantom glides,
And loudly to the skiff it calls
  That on the billow rides—

"Behold! these arms once vaunted might,
  This heart beat wild and bold—
Behold! these ducal veins ran bright
  With wine-red blood of old.

"The noon in storm, the eve in rest,
  So sped my life's brief day.
What then? *Young bark on Ocean's breast,*
  Cleave thou thy destined way!"

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

PROMETHEUS

Blacken thy heavens, Jove,
With thunder-clouds,
And exercise thee, like a boy
Who thistles crops,
With smiting oaks and mountain-tops!
Yet must leave me standing
My own firm Earth;
Must leave my cottage, which thou didst not build,
And my warm hearth,
Whose cheerful glow
Thou envieſt me.

I know naught more pitiful
Under the sun than you, Gods!
Ye nourish scantily,
With altar-taxes
And with cold lip-service,
This your majesty;—
Would perish, were not
Children and beggars
Credulous fools.

When I was a child,
And knew not whence or whither,
I would turn my wildered eye
To the sun, as if up yonder were

An ear to hear to my complaining,—
A heart, like mine,
On the oppressed to feel compassion.

Who helped me,
When I braved the Titans' insolence?
Who rescued me from death,
From slavery?
Hast thou not all thyself accomplished,
Holy-glowing heart?
And, glowing young and good,
Most ignorantly thanked
The slumberer above there?

I honor thee? For what?
Hast thou the miseries lightened
Of the down-trodden?
Hast thou the tears ever banished
From the afflicted?
Have I not to manhood been molded
By omnipotent Time,
And by Fate everlasting,—
My lords and thine?

Dreamedst thou ever
I should grow weary of living,
And fly to the desert,
Since not all our
Pretty dream-buds ripen?
Here sit I, fashion men
In mine own image,—
A race to be like me,
To weep and to suffer,
To be happy and to enjoy themselves,—
All careless of *thee* too,
As I!

(*John S. Dwight*)

TO THE PARTED ONE

And thou art now no longer near!
  From me, O fairest, thou hast flown!
Nor rings in my accustomed ear
  A single word—a single tone.

As when, at morn, the wanderer's eye
  Pierces the air in vain to see
Where, hidden in the deep-blue sky,
  High up the lark goes singing free,—

So wanders anxiously my gaze
  Piercing the field, the bush, the grove;
On thee still call my frequent lays:
  O, come to me again, dear love.

(*Christopher Pearse Cranch*)

TO A GOLDEN HEART, WORN ROUND HIS NECK

Remembrancer of joys long passed away,
  Relic, from which as yet I cannot part,
O, hast thou power to lengthen love's short day?
  Stronger thy chain than that which bound the heart?
Lili, I fly!—yet still thy fetters press me
  In distant valley, or far lonely wood.
Still with a struggling sigh of pain confess thee
  The mistress of my soul in every mood.

The bird may burst the silken chain that bound him,
  Flying to the green home, which fits him best;
But, ah! he bears the prisoner's badge around him,
  Still by the piece about his neck distressed.
He ne'er can breathe his free wild notes again;
They're stifled by the pressure of his chain.

(*Margaret Fuller Ossoli*)

MIGNON

Knowest thou the land where bloom the lemon trees,
And darkly gleam the golden oranges?

A gentle wind blows down from that blue sky;
Calm stands the myrtle and the laurel high.
Knowest thou the land? So far and fair!
Thou, whom I love, and I will wander there.

Knowest thou the house with all its rooms aglow,
And shining hall and columned portico?
The marble statues stand and look at me.
Alas, poor child, what have they done to thee?
Knowest thou the land? So far and fair.
My Guardian, thou and I will wander there.

Knowest thou the mountain with its bridge of cloud?
The mule plods warily: the white mists crowd.
Coiled in their caves the brood of dragons sleep;
The torrent hurls the rock from steep to steep.
Knowest thou the land? So far and fair.
Father, away! Our road is over there!

(*James Elroy Flecker*)

THE SHEPHERD'S LAMENT

Up yonder on the mountain
  A thousand times I stand,
Leant on my crook, and gazing
  Down on the valley-land.

I follow the flock to the pasture;
  My little dog watches them still.
I have come below, but I know not
  How I descended the hill.

The beautiful meadow is covered
  With blossoms of every hue;
I pluck them, alas! without knowing
  Whom I shall give them to.

I seek, in the rain and the tempest,
  A refuge under the tree:
Yonder the doors are fastened,
  And all is a dream to me.

Right over the roof of the dwelling
  I see a rainbow stand;
But she has departed forever,
  And gone far out in the land.

Far out in the land, and farther,—
  Perhaps to an alien shore:
Go forward, ye sheep! go forward,—
  The heart of the shepherd is sore.

(*Bayard Taylor*)

FROM FAUST

Prologue in Heaven

Raphael

The sun makes music as of old
  Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,
On its predestined circle rolled
  With thunder speed: the Angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
  Though none its meaning fathom may;
The world's unwithered countenance
  Is bright as at creation's day.

Gabriel

And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,
  The adorned Earth spins silently,
Alternating Elysian brightness
  With deep and dreadful night; the sea
Foams in broad billows from the deep
  Up to the rocks, and rocks and ocean,
Onward, with spheres which never sleep,
  Are hurried in eternal motion.

Michael

And tempests in contention roar
  From land to sea, from sea to land;
And, raging, weave a chain of power,
  Which girds the earth, as with a band.

A flashing desolation there
  Flames before the thunder's way;
But thy servants, Lord, revere
  The gentle changes of thy day.

CHORUS OF THE THREE

The Angels draw strength from thy glance,
  Though no one comprehend thee may;
Thy world's unwithered countenance
  Is bright as on creation's day.

(*Percy Bysshe Shelley*)

THE THOUGHT ETERNAL

WHETHER day my spirit's yearning
Unto far, blue hills has led,
Or the night lit all the burning
Constellations at my head—
Hours of light or hours nocturnal
Do I praise our mortal fate:
If man think the thought eternal
He is ever fair and great.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Friedrich von Schiller

1759–1805

THEKLA'S SONG

From The Piccolomini

THE cloud doth gather, the green wood roar,
The damsel paces along the shore;
The billows they tumble with might, with might;
And she flings out her voice to the darksome night;
  Her bosom is swelling with sorrow;

The world it is empty, the heart will die,
There's nothing to wish for beneath the sky:
Thou Holy One, call thy child away!
I've lived and loved, and that was to-day—
  Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow.

(*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*)

THE MAID OF ORLEANS

At thee *the Mocker* sneers in cold derision,
  Through thee he seeks to desecrate and dim
Glory for which he hath no soul or vision,
  For "God" and "Angel" are but sounds with him.
He makes the jewels of the heart his booty,
And scoffs at Man's Belief and Woman's Beauty.

Yet thou—a lowly shepherdess!—descended
  Not from a kingly but a godly race,
Are crowned by Poësy! Amid the splendid
  Of Heaven's high stars she builds thy dwellingplace,
Garlands thy temples with a wreath of glory,
And swathes thy memory in eternal Story.

The Base of this weak world exult at seeing
  The Fair defaced, the Lofty in the dust;
Yet grieve not! There are godlike hearts in being
  Which worship still the Beautiful and Just.
Let Momus and his mummers please the crowd,
Of nobleness alone a noble mind is proud.

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

Johann Gaudenz von Salis

1762–1834

SONG OF THE SILENT LAND

Into the Silent Land!
  Ah! who shall lead us thither?
Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,
  And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.
  Who leads us with a gentle hand
    Thither, O, thither,
    Into the Silent Land?

Into the Silent Land!
  To you, ye boundless regions
Of all perfection! Tender morning-visions

Of beauteous souls! The Future's pledge and band!
Who in Life's battle firm doth stand
Shall bear Hope's tender blossoms
Into the Silent Land!

O Land! O Land!
For all the broken-hearted
The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great departed,
Into the Silent Land!

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Justinus Kerner

1786–1862

HOME-SICKNESS

There calleth me ever a marvelous Horn,
"Come away! Come away!"
Is it earthly music faring astray,
Or is it air-born?
Oh, whether it be a spirit-wile
Or a forest voice,
It biddeth mine ailing heart rejoice,
Yet sorrow the while!

In the greenwood glades—o'er the garlanded bowl—
Night, Noontide, and Morn,
The summoning call of that marvelous Horn
Tones home to my soul!
In vain have I sought for it east and west,
But I darkly feel
That so soon as its music shall cease to peal
I go to my rest!

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

Ludwig Uhland

1787–1862

DURAND OF BLONDEN

Tow'rds the lofty walls of Balbi, lo! Durand of Blonden hies;
Thousand songs are in his bosom; Love and Pleasure light his eyes.
There, he dreams, his own true maiden, beauteous as the evening-star,
Leaning o'er her turret-lattice, waits to hear her knight's guitar.

In the lindenshaded courtyard soon Durand begins his lay.
But his eyes glance vainly upwards; there they meet no answering ray.
Flowers are blooming in the lattice, rich of odor, fair to see.
But the fairest flower of any, Lady Blanca, where is she?

Ah! while yet he chants the ditty, draws a mourner near and speaks—
"She is dead, is dead forever, whom Durand of Blonden seeks!"
And the knight replies not, breathes not: darkness gathers round his brain:
He is dead, is dead forever, and the mourners weep the twain.

In the darkened castle-chapel burn a many tapers bright:
There the lifeless maiden lies, with whitest wreaths and ribands dight.
There . . . But lo! a mighty marvel! she hath oped her eyes of blue!
All are lost in joy and wonder! Lady Blanca lives anew!

Dreams and visions flit before her, as she asks of those anear,
"Heard I not my lover singing?—Is Durand of Blonden here?"

Yes, O Lady, thou hast heard him; he has died for thy dear sake!
He could wake his trancèd mistress: him shall none for ever wake!

He is in a realm of glory, but as yet he weets not where;
He but seeks the Lady Blanca: dwells she not already there?
Till he finds her must he wander to and fro, as one bereaven,
Ever calling, "Blanca! Blanca!" through the desert halls of Heaven.

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA

"Hast thou seen that lordly castle,
That castle by the sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.

"And fain it would stoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening's crimson glow."

"Well have I seen that castle,
That castle by the sea,
And the moon above it standing,
And the mist rise solemnly."

"The winds and the waves of ocean,
Had they a merry chime?
Didst thou hear, from those lofty chambers,
The harp and the minstrel's rhyme?"

"The winds and the waves of ocean,
They rested quietly;
But I heard on the gale a sound of wail,
And tears came to mine eye."

"And sawest thou on the turrets
  The king and his royal bride,
And the wave of their crimson mantles,
  And the golden crown of pride?

"Led they not forth, in rapture,
  A beauteous maiden there,
Resplendent as the morning sun,
  Beaming with golden hair?"

"Well saw I the ancient parents,
  Without the crown of pride;
They were moving slow, in weeds of woe;
  No maiden was by her side!"

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

IN A LOVELY GARDEN WALKING

In a lovely garden walking
  Two lovers went hand in hand;
Two wan, worn figures, talking
  They sat in the flowery land.

On the cheek they kissed one another,
  On the mouth with sweet refrain;
Fast held they each the other.
  And were young and well again.

Two little bells rang shrilly—
  The dream went with the hour:
She lay in the cloister stilly,
  He far in the dungeon-tower!

(*George MacDonald*)

A LEAF

A leaf falls softly at my feet,
Sated with rain and summer heat;
What time this leaf was green and new,
I still had parents dear and true.

A leaf—how soon it fades away!
Child of the spring, the autumn's prey;
Yet has this leaf outlived, I see,
So much that was most dear to me.

(*John S. Dwight*)

THE HOSTESS' DAUGHTER

Three fellows were marching over the Rhine,
They stopped where they saw the hostess' sign.

"Dear Hostess, have you good beer and wine?
Where have you your daughter so fair and fine?"

"My beer is good, my wine is clear,
My daughter is lying upon the bier."

Now into the chamber she led the way,
There in a black coffin the maiden lay.

The first man drew the veil aside,
And full of sorrow the maid espied.

"Ah, beautiful maiden, if thou couldst live!
To thee alone my love I would give!"

The second laid back the veil again,
And turned away and wept in pain.

"Oh, why must thou lie upon the bier!
Alas, I have loved thee for many a year."

The third man lifted again the veil,
And kissed her upon the lips so pale:

"I loved thee always, I love thee to-day,
And I will love thee forever, and aye."

(*Margarete Münsterberg*)

Friedrich Rueckert

1789–1866

THE RIDE ROUND THE PARAPET

She said, "I was not born to mope at home in loneliness,"—
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne,
She said, "I was not born to mope at home in loneliness,
When the heart is throbbing sorest there is balsam in the forest,
There is balsam in the forest for its pain,"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

She doffed her silks and pearls, and donned instead her hunting-gear,
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
She doffed her silks and pearls, and donned instead her hunting-gear,
And, till Summertime was over, as a huntress and a rover
Did she couch upon the mountain and the plain,
She, the Lady Eleanora,
Noble Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

Returning home agen, she viewed with scorn the tournaments—
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Returning home agen, she viewed with scorn the tournaments;
She saw the morions cloven and the crowning chaplets woven,
And the sight awakened only the disdain
Of the Lady Eleanora,
Of the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

"My feeling towards Man is one of utter scornfulness,"
Said Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

"My feeling towards Man is one of utter scornfulness,"
And he that would o'ercome it, let him ride around the summit
Of my battlemented Castle by the Maine,"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

So came a knight anon to ride around the parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
So came a knight anon to ride around the parapet,
Man and horse were hurled together o'er the crags that beetled nether.
Said the Lady, "There, I fancy, they'll remain!"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Queenly Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

Then came another knight to ride around the parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Then came another knight to ride around the parapet,
Man and horse fell down, asunder, o'er the crags that beetled under.
Said the Lady, "They'll not leap the leap again!"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Lovely Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

Came other knights anon to ride around the parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Came other knights anon to ride around the parapet,
Till six and thirty corses of both mangled men and horses
Had been sacrificed as victims at the fane
Of the Lady Eleanora,
Stately Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

That woeful year was by, and Ritter none came afterwards
To Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

That woeful year was by, and Ritter none came afterwards;
The Castle's lonely basscourt looked a wild o'ergrown-with-grass court.
'Twas abandoned by the Ritters and their train
To the Lady Eleanora,
Haughty Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

She clomb the silent wall, she gazed around her sovran-like;
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!
She clomb the silent wall, she gazed around her sovran-like;
"And wherefore have departed all the Brave, the lion-hearted,
Who have left me here to play the Castellain?"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

"And is it fled for aye, the palmy time of Chivalry?"
Cried Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
"And is it fled for aye, the palmy time of Chivalry?
Shame light upon the cravens! May their corpses gorge the ravens,
Since they tremble thus to wear a woman's chain!"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

The story reached at Gratz the gallant Margrave Gondibert
Of Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
The story reached at Gratz the gallant Margrave Gondibert.
Quoth he, "I trow the woman must be more or less than human;
She is worth a little peaceable campaign,
Is the Lady Eleanora,
Is the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!"

He trained a horse to pace round narrow stones laid merlonwise,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
He trained a horse to pace round narrow stones laid merlonwise,
"Good Gray! do thou thy duty, and this rocky-bosomed beauty
Shall be taught that all the vauntings are in vain
Of the Lady Eleanora,
Of the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!"

He left his castle-halls, he came to Lady Eleanora's,
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
He left his castle-halls, he came to Lady Eleanora's.
"O, lady, best and fairest, here am I,—and, if thou carest,
I will gallop round the parapet amain,
Noble Lady Eleanora,
Noble Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!"

She saw him spring to horse, that gallant Margrave Gondibert,
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
She saw him spring to horse, that gallant Margrave Gondibert.
"O, bitter, bitter sorrow! I shall weep for this to-morrow!
It were better that in battle he were slain,"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

Then rode he round and round the battlemented parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Then rode he round and round the battlemented parapet:
The Lady wept and trembled, and her paly face resembled,
As she looked away, a lily wet with rain;
Hapless Lady Eleanora!
Hapless Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

So rode he round and round the battlemented parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!
So rode he round and round the battlemented parapet;
"Accurst be my ambition! He but rideth to perdition,
He but rideth to perdition without rein!"
Wept the Lady Eleanora,
Wept the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

Yet rode he round and round the battlemented parapet,
For Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Yet rode he round and round the battlemented parapet.
Meanwhile her terror shook her—yea, her breath well nigh forsook her.
Fire was burning in the bosom and the brain
Of the Lady Eleanora,
Of the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

Then rode he round and off the battlemented parapet
To Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Then rode he round and off the battlemented parapet.
"Now blest be God for ever! This is marvelous! I never
Cherished hope of laying eyes on thee agayne,"
Cried the Lady Eleanora,
Joyous Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

"The Man of Men thou art, for thou hast fairly conquered me,
The Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!
"The Man of Men thou art, for thou hast fairly conquered me.
I greet thee as my lover, and, ere many days be over,
Thou shalt wed me and be Lord of my domain,"
Said the Lady Eleanora,
Said the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

Then bowed the graceful knight, the gallant Margrave Gondibert,
To Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

Then bowed that graceful knight, the gallant Margrave Gondibert,
And thus he answered coldly, "There be many who as boldly
Will adventure an achievement they disdain,
For the Lady Eleanora,
For the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

"Mayest bide until they come, O stately Lady Eleanora!
O, Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!
Mayest bide until they come, O stately Lady Eleanora!
And thou and they may marry, but, for me, I must not tarry,
I have won a wife already out of Spain,
Virgin Lady Eleanora,
Virgin Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!"

Thereon he rode away, the gallant Margrave Gondibert,
From Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Thereon he rode away, the gallant Margrave Gondibert.
And long in shame and anguish did that haughty Lady languish,
Did she languish without pity for her pain,
She the Lady Eleanora,
She the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.

And year went after year, and still in barren maidenhood
Lived Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
And wrinkled Eld crept on, and still her lot was maidenhood,
And, woe! her end was tragic; she was changed, at length, by magic,
To an ugly wooden image, they maintain;
She, the Lady Eleanora,
She, the Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

And now, before the gate, in sight of all, transmogrified,
Stands Lady Eleanora von Alleyne.
Before her castle-gate, in sight of all, transmogrified,

And he that won't salute her must be fined in foaming pewter,
If a boor—but, if a burgher, in champagne,
For the Lady Eleanora,
Wooden Lady Eleanora von Alleyne!

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

Heinrich Heine

1799–1856

The comfort of coming to a man of genius, who finds in verse his freest and most perfect expression, whose voyage over the deep of poetry destiny makes smooth! The magic of Heine's poetical form is incomparable; he employs this form with the most exquisite lightness and ease, and yet it has at the same time the inborn fulness, pathos, and old-world charm of all true forms of popular poetry. Thus in Heine's poetry, too, one perpetually blends the impression of French modernism and clearness with that of German sentiment and fulness.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

AD FINEM

THE years they come and go,
The races drop in the grave,
Yet never the love doth so
Which here in my heart I have.

Could I see thee but once, one day,
And sink down so on my knee,
And die in thy sight while I say,
"Lady, I love but thee!"

(*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*)

MEIN KIND, WIR WAREN KINDER

MY child, we were two children,
Small, merry by childhood's law;
We used to creep to the henhouse,
And hide ourselves in the straw.

We crowed like cocks, and whenever
The passers near us drew—

"Cock-a-doodle!" they thought
'Twas a real cock that crew.

The boxes about our courtyard
We carpeted to our mind,
And lived there both together—
Kept house in a noble kind.

The neighbor's old cat often
Came to pay us a visit;
(We have made the very same speeches
Each with a compliment in it.)

After her health we asked,
Our care and regard to evince—
(We have made the very same speeches
To many an old cat since).

We also sat and wisely
Discoursed, as old folks do,
Complaining how all went better
In those good old times we knew;—

How love, and truth, and believing
Had left the world to itself,
And how so dear was the coffee,
And how so rare was the pelf.

The children's games are over,
The rest is over with youth—
The world, the good games, the good times,
The belief, and the love, and the truth.

(*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*)

THE SEA HATH ITS PEARLS

The sea hath its pearls,
  The heaven hath its stars;
But my heart, my heart,
  My heart hath its love.

Great are the sea, and the heaven;
  Yet greater is my heart,
And fairer than pearls or stars
  Flashes and beams my love.

Thou little, youthful maiden,
  Come unto my great heart;
My heart, and the sea and the heaven
  Are melting away with love!

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

SAG' MIR WER EINST DIE UHREN ERFUND

Who was it, tell me, that first of men reckon'd
Time by the hour and the minute and second?
A soulless man, without heart or light,
He sat and he mused in the long winter's night,
And counted the pittering steps of the mouse,
And the pick of the woodworm that gnawed at the house.

Kisses, now tell me, who first did discover?
It was the warm happy mouth of a lover;
He kiss'd without ceasing, he kiss'd without care,
He kiss'd his first kiss in the May-season fair;
The flowers from their emerald cradle upsprang,
The sun brightly beam'd, the birds sweetly sang.

(*Richard Garnett*)

WARUM SIND DENN DIE ROSEN SO BLASS

O dearest, canst thou tell me why
  The rose should be so pale?
And why the azure violet
  Should wither in the vale?

And why the lark should in the cloud
  So sorrowfully sing?
And why from loveliest balsam-buds
  A scent of death should spring?

And why the sun upon the mead
So chillingly should frown?
And why the earth should, like a grave,
Be moldering and brown?

And why it is that I myself
So languishing should be?
And why it is, my heart of hearts,
That thou forsakest me?

(*Richard Garnett*)

ES FÄLLT EIN STERN HERUNTER

See yonder, where a gem of night
Falls helpless from its heavenly height!
It is the bright star of Love
That thus forsakes the realms above.

And one by one the wind bereaves
The apple-tree of silvery leaves;
The breezes, in their reckless play,
Spurn them with dancing feet away.

And round and round swims on the pool
The tuneful swan so beautiful,
And ever singing sweet and slow
He sinks into his grave below.

It is so dreary and so dread!
The leaf is wholly witherèd,
The fallen star has flamed away,
The swan has sung his dying lay.

(*Richard Garnett*)

DIE ROSE, DIE LILIE, DIE TAUBE, DIE SONNE

The rose and the lily, the moon and the dove,
Once loved I them all with a perfect love.
I love them no longer, I love alone
The Lovely, the Graceful, the Pure, the One

Who twines in one wreath all their beauty and love,
And rose is, and lily, and moon and dove.

(*Richard Garnett*)

MEIN LIEBCHEN, WIR SASSEN ZUSAMMEN

My darling, we sat together,
We two, in our frail boat;
The night was calm o'er the wide sea
Whereon we were afloat.

The Specter-Island, the lovely,
Lay dim in the moon's mild glance;
There sounded sweetest music,
There waved the shadowy dance.

It sounded sweeter and sweeter,
It waved there to and fro;
But we slid past forlornly
Upon the great sea-flow.

(*James Thomson*)

ES STEHEN UNBEWEGLICH

For many thousand ages
The steadfast stars above
Have gazed upon each other
With ever mournful love.

They speak a certain language,
So beautiful, so grand,
Which none of the philologians
Could ever understand.

But I have learned it, learned it,
For ever, by the grace
Of studying one grammar,
My heart's own darling's face.

(*James Thomson*)

EIN FICHTENBAUM STEHT EINSAM

A PINE-TREE ſtandeth lonely
In the North on an upland bare;
It ſtandeth whitely shrouded
With snow, and sleepeth there.

It dreameth of a Palm Tree
Which far in the Eaſt alone,
In mournful silence ſtandeth
On its ridge of burning ſtone.

(*James Thomson*)

MIR TRÄUMTE WIEDER DER ALTE TRAUM

THE old dream comes again to me:
With May-night ſtars above,
We two sat under the linden-tree
And swore eternal love.

Again and again we plighted troth,
We chattered, and laughed, and kissed;
To make me well remember my oath
You gave me a bite in the wrist.

O darling with the eyes serene,
And with the teeth so white!
The vows were proper to the scene,
Superfluous was the bite.

(*James Thomson*)

DU BIST WIE EINE BLUME

E'EN as a lovely flower,
So fair, so pure thou art;
I gaze on thee, and sadness
Comes ſtealing o'er my heart.

My hands I fain had folded
Upon thy soft brown hair,
Praying that God may keep thee
So lovely, pure and fair.

(*Kate Freiligrath Kroeker*)

THE MESSAGE

Up, boy! arise, and saddle quick,
And mount your swiftest steed,
And to King Duncan's castle ride
O'er bush and brake with speed.

There slip into the stable soft,
Till one shall see you hide,
Then ask him: Which of Duncan's girls
Is she that is a bride?

And if he say, The dark-haired one,
Then give your mare the spur;
But if he say, The fair-haired one,
You need not hurry here.

You only need, if that's the case,
Buy me a hempen cord,
Ride slowly back and give it me,
But never speak a word.

(*Kate Freiligrath Kroeker*)

TO MY MOTHER

I've kept a haughty heart thro' grief and mirth,
And borne my head perchance a thought too high;
If even a king should look me in the eye
I would not bend it humbly to the earth:
Yet, dearest mother, such the gentle worth
Of thy benignant presence, angel-mild,
It ever hath my proudest moods beguiled,
And given to softer, humbler feelings birth.
Was it thy mind's calm penetrative power,
Thy purer mind, that secretly came o'er me,
And unto Heaven's clearer light upbore me;
Or did remembrance sting me in that hour,
With thought of words and deeds which pierced unkindly
That gentle heart, loving me still so blindly.

(*Matilda Dickson*)

MÄDCHEN MIT DEM ROTHEN MÜNDCHEN

LASSIE, with the lips sae rosy,
  With the eyne sae saft and bricht,
Dear wee lassie, I keep thinkin',
  Thinkin' on thee day and nicht.

Winter nichts are lang and eerie;
  Oh, gin I were with thee, dear,
Arms about thee, cracking couthly,
  With nae mortal by to hear!

With my kisses I would smother
  Thy white hand sae jimp and sma',
And my tears for very rapture
  On that wee white hand should fa'.

(*Sir Theodore Martin*)

ANNO 1829

I CRAVE an ampler, worthier sphere:
  I'd liefer bleed at every vein
Than stifle 'mid these hucksters here,
  These lying slaves of paltry gain.

They eat, they drink; they're every whit
  As happy as their type, the mole;
Large are their bounties—as the slit
  Through which they drop the poor man's dole.

With pipe in mouth they go their way,
  With hands in pockets; they are blest
With grand digestions: only *they*
  Are such hard morsels to digest!

The hand that's red with some dark deed,
  Some giant crime, were white as wool
Compared with these sleek saints, whose creed
  Is paying all their debts in full.

Ye clouds that sail to far-off lands,
  O waft me to what clime ye will!

To Lapland's snows, to Lybia's sands,
  To the world's end—but onward still!

Take me, O clouds! They ne'er look down;
  But (proof of a discerning mind)
One moment hung o'er Hamburg town,
  The next they leave it leagues behind.

(*Charles Stuart Calverley*)

THE AZRA

Daily walked the fair and lovely
Sultan's daughter in the twilight,—
In the twilight by the fountain,
Where the sparkling waters plash.

Daily stood the young slave silent
In the twilight by the fountain
Where the plashing waters sparkle,
Pale and paler every day.

Once by twilight came the princess
Up to him with rapid questions:
"I would know thy name, thy nation,
Whence thou comest, who thou art."

And the young slave said, "My name is
Mahomet, I come from Yemmen.
I am of the sons of Azra,
Men who perish if they love."

(*John Hay*)

I'M BLACK AND BLUE

I'm black and blue from their worrying,
  They've tortured me early and late,
Some with their love—God help me!
  The others with their hate.

They've poisoned the wine on my table,
  They've poisoned the bread on my plate,

Some with their love—God help me!
  The others with their hate.

But she who most has worried,
  And tortured and troubled—she
Has never either loved me,
  Or even hated me.

(*John Todhunter*)

FRESCO-SONNETS TO CHRISTIAN SETHE

1

I LAUGH at each dull bore, taste's parasite
  Who stares upon me with his goatish eyes;
  And those raw freshmen, lean as hungry flies,
  Who gape and sniff at me in petty spite.
I laugh, too, at those apes, whose learning trite
  Puffs them with pride to pose as critics wise;
  And at those dastard rogues, my enemies,
  'Gainst poisoned weapons daring me to fight.
Yet when Joy's nosegay of delightful things
  Is shattered for us by the hand of Fate,
  And at our feet flung withered, without scent,
And when the heart within the breast is rent,
  Rent, and stabbed through, sore-wounded, desperate—
  What's left us but that laugh that shrilly rings?

2

Give me a mask, I'll join the masquerade,
  Playing the knave that charlatans I see,
  Flaunting in gaudy robes of dignity,
  May count me not a craftsman of their trade.
Come vulgar words and manners to my aid,
  In popular art I'll take my base degree,
  All those rare sparks of genius banned shall be,
  Wherewith stale rogues of late fine tricks have played.
And thus will I dance at the grand masqued-ball,
  'Mid German knights, monks, kings in motley crew,
  Capped to by Harlequin, known to but few,

With their blunt swords of lath cudgelled by all.
That is their sport. Should I unmask, beware!
I should dumbfounder every jail-bird there.

(*John Todhunter*)

A MAIDEN LIES IN HER CHAMBER

A MAIDEN lies in her chamber
Lit by a trembling moon;
Outside there rises and echoes
A waltz's giddy tune.

"I wonder who breaks my slumber;
I'll go to the window and see—"
And lo, a skeleton stands there;
He fiddles and sings with glee:

"A dance you swore to give me,
And you have broken your vow;
Tonight there's a ball in the churchyard;
Come out and dance with me now!"

The maid, as though moved by magic,
Obeys, and leaves the house;
The skeleton, fiddling and singing,
Goes on with its wild carouse.

It fiddles and leaps and dances
And rattles its bones to the tune;
Its skull keeps nodding and nodding
Crazily under the moon.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

OH LOVELY FISHERMAIDEN

OH lovely fishermaiden,
Come, bring your boat to land;
And we will sit together
And whisper, hand in hand.

O rest upon my bosom,
And fear no harm from me.
You give your body daily,
Unfearing to the sea. . . .

My heart is like the ocean
  With storm and ebb and flow—
And many a pearly treasure
  Burns in the depths below.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

TWILIGHT

We sat at the hut of the fisher
  And idly watched the sea,
While in the hush of evening
  The mists rose silently.

The yellow lights in the lighthouse
  Shone like a burnished bell,
And in the hazy distance
  One ship still rose and fell.

We spoke of storm and shipwreck,
  Of sailors and their life.
Pulled between sky and water,
  Fierce joy and lusty strife.

We gossiped of distant places,
  Of North and South we spoke,
Of wild and curious customs,
  And wild and curious folk.

Of how the Ganges sparkles;
  Of great exotic trees;
Of folk who worship the lotus
  Silently, on their knees.

Of Lapland; its slovenly people,
  Flat-headed, broad-featured and small,
That do little else but bake fishes
  And squat by the fire and squall. . . .

The girls all listened breathless;
  Then silence, like a spell . . .
The ship could be seen no longer—
  Swiftly the darkness fell.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

THE COFFIN

The songs, so old and bitter,
  The dreams so wild and drear,
Let's bury them together—
  What ho! A coffin here!

I have so much to bury
  It never will be done,
Unless the coffin's larger
  Than Heidelberg's great Tun.

And bring a bier to match it
  Of stoutest oaks and pines;
It must be even longer
  Than the long bridge at Mainz.

And also bring twelve giants
  Of mightier brawn and bone
Than Christopher, the sainted,
  Whose shrine is in Cologne.

And in the great sea sink it
  Beneath the proudest wave;
For such a mighty coffin
  Should have a mighty grave . . .

You know what makes my coffin
  So great, so hard to bear?
It holds my love within it,
  And my too heavy care.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

THE STORM

A howling storm is brewing,
  The wind and rain are wild;
And what can my love be doing,
  That pale and frightened child?

There at the window dreaming,
  I see her, worn and white;
With eyes no longer beaming,
  She stares into the night.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

MY SONGS ARE POISONED

My songs, they say, are poisoned.
  How else, love, could it be?
Thou hast, with deadly magic,
  Poured poison into me.

My songs, they say, are poisoned.
  How else, then could it be?
I carry a thousand serpents
  And, love, among them—thee!

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

WHEN TWO ARE PARTED

When two who love are parted,
  They talk, as friend to friend,
Clasp hands and weep a little,
  And sigh without an end.

We did not weep, my darling,
  Not sigh "Why must this be . . ."
The tears, the sighs, the anguish
  Came later—and to me.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

FROM THE NORTH SEA

Evening Twilight

On the wan sea-strand
Lonely I lay, and in sorrowful brooding.
The sun sank lower and lower, and flung
His red rays, glowing, on the water,
And I watched the far white billows,
In the grip of the flood,

Foaming and roaring, nigher and nigher—
Strange medley of sounds! a whispering and wailing,
A laughing and murmuring, sobbing and sighing,
Low voices, the while, a strange lullaby singing.
Methought I heard long-forgotten legends,
World-old adorable folk-tales,
That long since in boyhood
From neighbors' children I learnt;
When, of a summer evening,
On the steps of stone by the house-door,
We squatted for quiet story-telling,
With small hearts eagerly listening
And young eyes keen for wonders;
While the fair grown-up maidens
Sat, 'mid balm-breathing pots of flowers,
At a window over the way there,
With rosy faces,
Smiling and lit by the moon.

(*John Todhunter*)

Epilog

Like the ears of wheat in a wheat-field growing,
So a thousand thoughts spring and tremble
In the minds of men.
But the tender fancies of love
Are like the happy colors that leap among them;
Red and blue flowers.
Red and blue flowers!
The sullen reaper destroys you as worthless;
Block-headed fools will scornfully thresh you;
Even the penniless wayfarer
Who is charmed and cheered by your faces,
Shakes his poor head,
And calls you pretty weeds!
But the young girl from the village,
Twining her garland,
Honors and gathers you.
And with you she brightens her lovely tresses.
And thus adorned, she hurries to the dancing,

Where fiddles and flutes are sweetly sounding;
Or runs to the sheltering beech-tree,
Where the voice of her lover sounds even sweeter
Than fiddles and flutes.

(*Louis Untermeyer*)

Eduard Möricke

1804–1875

BEAUTY ROHTRAUT

WHAT is the name of King Ringang's daughter?
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!
And what does she do the livelong day,
Since she dare not knit and spin alway?
O hunting and fishing is ever her play!
And, heigh! that her huntsman I might be!
I'd hunt and fish right merrily!
Be silent, heart!

And it chanced that, after this some time,
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!
The boy in the Castle has gained access,
And a horse he has got and a huntsman's dress,
To hunt and to fish with the merry Princess;
And, O! that a king's son I might be!
Beauty Rohtraut I love so tenderly.
Hush! hush! my heart.

Under a gray old oak they sat,
Beauty, Beauty Rohtraut!
She laughs: "Why look you so slyly at me?
If you have heart enough, come, kiss me."
Cried the breathless boy, "Kiss thee?"
But he thinks kind fortune has favored my youth;
And thrice he has kissed Beauty Rohtraut's mouth.
Down! down! mad heart.

Then slowly and silently they rode home,—
Rohtraut, Beauty Rohtraut!
The boy was lost in his delight:
"And, wert thou Empress this very night,

I would not heed or feel the blight;
Ye thousand leaves of the wild wood wist
How Beauty Rohtraut's mouth I kiss'd.
Hush! hush! wild heart."

(*George Meredith*)

Detlev von Liliencron

1844–1909

AUTUMN

A FLOCK of crows high from the Northland flies,
On their dark wings the evening sunshine plays.
Below the Ursulines' calm convent lies
And an old man dreams in its garden ways.
From the cool chapel float the harmonies
Upward in rapture deep of peace and grace
And fall and fade . . . All sound of living dies
While the old man unto Our Lady prays.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Gustav Falke

1853–1916

GOD'S HARP

THE wind, stirring in the dark foliage, brings
Songs to me of the wakeful nightingale;
At intervals a stranger music rings.
Whence are these voices that now light,
Now deeply echo from the night
And now of their own beauty fail?

The apple bough of white
That at my open window rocks and sways,
Against the pane its dewy blossom lays,
Shines magically in the blanchèd light,
A sabbath radiance covers all the ways;
My vision waxes vast and wide:

Oh, there arises now a solemn tide
For those who live in dreams, the delicate

Souls that to every subtle tone vibrate
Which from God's harp rings forth and prophesies
That he forever
His busy hand in ancient music plies,
And will not end the song of His delight.

Thus ends it never—
Hark, what a tone of love passed through the night.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Richard Dehmel

1863–1920

BEFORE THE STORM

The sky grew darker with each minute
Outside my room, I felt within it
The clouds, disconsolate and gray.
The ash-tree yonder moved its crown
With heavy creaking up and down,
The dead leaves whirled across the way.

Then ticked, through the close room, unhurried,
As in still vaults where men are buried
The woodworm gnaws, and ticks my watch.
And through the open door close by,
Wailed the piano, thin and shy,
Beneath her touch.

Slate-like upon us weighed the heaven,
Her playing grew more sorrow-riven,
I saw her form.
Sharp gusts upon the ash-tree beat,
The air, aflame with dust and heat,
Sighed for the storm.

Pale through the walls the sounds came sobbing,
Her blind, tear-wasted hands passed throbbing
Across the keys.
Crouching she sang that song of May
That once had sung my heart away,
She panted lest the song should cease.

In the dull clouds no shadow shivered,
The aching music moaned and quivered
Like dull knives in me, ſtroke on ſtroke—
And in that song of love was blent
Two children's voices' loud lament—
Then firſt the lightning broke.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

VIGIL

The crimson roses burn and glow,
Softly the dark leaves ſtir and shake,
And I am in the grass awake,
Oh, wert thou here . . .
For soon the mid of night will break!

Into the lake the moonbeams flow,
The garden-gate hides her from view,
The moveless willows ſtand arow,
My burning forehead seeks the dew;
Oh, I have never loved thee so!

Oh, I have never so deeply known
As often as our close embrace
Made each the other, why thy face
Grew pallid and thy heart made moan
When all my being sought thy grace.

And now—oh, hadſt thou seen how there
Two little fire-flies crept alow,
I never more from thee will fare,
Oh, wert thou here,
Or ſtill the crimson roses glow.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

HARVEST SONG

A field of golden wheat there grows,
Even to the world's end it goes.
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

The wind falters in all the land,
The mills on the horizon stand.
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

The evening sky turns somber red;
Many poor people cry for bread.
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

The night's womb holds a storm within;
To-morrow shall the task begin.
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

The storm shall sweep the fields of earth
Until no man cries out for dearth!
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

THE SILENT TOWN

A town lies in the valley,
A pale day fades and dies;
And it will not be long before
Neither moon nor starlight,
Night only fills the skies.

From all the mountain ridges
Creeps mist, and swathes the town;
No farm, no house, no wet red roof
Can pierce the thickly woven woof,
And scarce even spires and bridges.

But as the wanderer shudders,
Deep down a streak of light rejoices
His heart; and, through the smoke and haze,
Children's voices
Begin a gentle hymn of praise.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

THE LABORER

We have a bed, and a baby too,
My wife!

We have work besides, we have work for two,
And we have the sun, and the wind, and the rain,
And we only need one little thing more,
To be as free as the birds that soar:
Only time.

When we go through the fields on the Sunday morn,
My child,
And far and away o'er the bending corn,
We see the swarming swallows flash,
Then we only need a bit of a dress,
To have the birds' bright loveliness:
Only time.

The storm is gathering black as jet,
Feel the poor.
Only a little eternity yet;
We need nothing else, my wife, my child,
Except all things through us that thrive,
To be bold as the birds through the air that drive:
Only time!

(*Jethro Bithell*)

VOICE IN THE DARKNESS

There's moaning somewhere in the dark.
I want to know what it may be.
The wind is angry with the night—

Yet the wind's moan sounds not so near.
The wind will always moan at night.
'Tis in my ear my blood that moans—
My blood, forsooth.

Yet not so strangely moans my blood.
My blood is tranquil like the night.
I think a heart must moan somewhere.

(*Margarete Münsterberg*)

Cäsar Flaischlen

1864–1920

MOST QUIETLY AT TIMES

Most quietly at times and like a dream
In thee re-echoes a far distant song . . .
Thou knowest not whence suddenly it came,
Thou knowest not what it would have of thee . . .
And like a dream most peacefully and still
It dies in distant music, even as it came . . .

As suddenly as in the crowded street,
And in the very winter's frozen heart,
An odor of roses will around thee breathe,
Or as a picture unawares will rise
From far-forgotten happy childhood's days,
And gaze at thee with eyes inquisitive . . .

Most quietly, and lightly as a dream . . .
Thou knowest not whence suddenly it came,
Thou knowest not what it would have of thee,
And like a dream most peacefully and still
It pales and passes, fading when it came.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Otto Julius Bierbaum

1865–1910

KINDLY VISION

Not in sleep I saw it, but in daylight,
Clear and beautiful by day before me:
Saw a meadow overgrown with daisies,
Round a cottage white in green embowered;
Statues of the gods gleam in the arbor.
And the lady that I walk with loves me,
With a quiet spirit in the coolness
And the peacefulness of this white dwelling,
Full of beauty waiting till we enter.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

BLACKSMITH PAIN

Pain is a blacksmith,
Hard is his hammer;
With flying flames
His hearth is hot;
A straining storm
Of forces ferocious
Blows his bellows.
He hammers hearts
And tinkers them,
With blows tremendous,
Till hard they hold.—
Well, well forges Pain.—
No storm destroys,
No frost consumes,
No rust corrodes,
What Pain has forged.

(Jethro Bithell)

OFT IN THE SILENT NIGHT

Oft in the silent night
When faint our breathing grows
And sickle-bright the moon
In the dark heaven glows,

When all is quieted
And no desires command,
Then my soul leadeth me
Into my childhood's land.

Then I see how infirm
My little feet did go,
And see my childish eye
And my small hands also,

And hear how then my mouth
Spoke ever pure and plain
And sink my head and of
My life take thought again:

Didst thou, didst thou always
Tread paths as white and sweet
As thou didst walk upon
With little childish feet?

Hast thou, hast thou always
Spoken as clear and true
As long ago thy voice
Faltering was wont to do?

And hast thou ever looked
So straight into the face
Of the great sun as once
With childhood's fearless grace?

My glance, O Moon, I lift
Unto thy splendor white;
Deep, deep am I made sad
Oft in the silent night.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Stefan George

1868–

STANZAS CONCERNING LOVE

I

A NOVICE when I came beneath thy gaze,
There was no wonder in mine eyes before
And no desire till I beheld thy grace.
Be thou benign to young hands folded where
I pray to be thy servant evermore.
And with long-suffering compassion spare
The feet still faltering on alien ways.

II

Now that my lips are very still and burn
Do I behold whither have gone my feet:
Into a splendid realm for others meet.
Ah, yet perchance it was the hour to turn,
When thro' the lofty gateway seemed to shine
The eyes whose light my bended knees entreat
Seeking my own and giving me a sign.

III

Dead forever is my world of old.
Sense and spirit for thy presence reaches,
Interchange of unimagined speeches,
Grace, withdrawal, service manifold.
Only thee would I in dreams behold,
And I mourn the visions fugitive
With the golden dark wherein they live,
When the cloudless morning rises cold.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

RAPTURE

I

I FEEL a breath from other planets blowing
And pallid through the darkness wax the faces
That even now so kind and near were glowing.

Gray and more gray are tree and path and meadow
So that I scarcely know familiar places,
And thou, dear summoner of my pain, bright shadow,

Too far in deeper glow dissolved hast floated
To deem me, after this wild tumult's mazes,
To any earthly love or awe devoted.

Melted I am in music, circling, driven,
In boundless gratitude and nameless praises
Will and desireless to the eternal given.

II

A tempest wafts me and I am elated
In passionate madness of the women grieving
Who deep in dust their prayers have consecrated.

Then I behold the milky mists dislimning,
A noble clearness filled with sunshine leaving
Wherein the farthest mountain peaks are swimming.

The ground beneath me, white and soft, is shaken . . .
By monstrous chasms I mount high and higher
Above the last cloud's silver edge to waken,

In seas of crystal radiance to dip under—
I am a spark of the eternal fire,
And of the eternal voice I am the thunder!

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

THE LORD OF THE ISLE

Fishermen will relate that in the South
Upon an island rich in spice and oil
And precious stones that glitter in the sand,
There dwelt a bird who, standing upon earth,
Could tear the crowns of lofty trees asunder
With his strong beak; who, lifting up his wings
Dyed as with ichor of the Tyrian snail,
Unto his low and heavy flight, had been
A shadow in seeming, like a somber cloud.
By day he vanished in the olive groves,
But evening ever brought him to the shore
Where in the coolness of the salt sea-breeze
He raised up his sweet voice and dolphins came,
Who are the friends of song, across the sea
With golden feathers filled and golden sparks.
Thus lived he since the making of the world
And only ship-wrecked sailors saw his form.
But when for the first time the snowy sails
Of man, guided by fortunate winds had turned
Unto his island—to its topmost hill
He rose surveying that beloved place,
And spreading out his mighty pinions
Departed with a muffled cry of pain.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Alfred Mombert

1872-

SLEEPING THEY BEAR ME

Sleeping they bear me
Into my homeland.
From far away I come,
Hither over peaks and chasms

Over a dark ocean
Into my homeland.

Now that I have quelled the strongest
of the giants,
Out of the darkest land
Won my way home,
Led by a white fairy hand—

Echo heavy the bells.
And I stagger through the streets
Sleep-bound.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

IDYL

And my young sweetheart sat at board with me.
I ate and drank and cried most bitterly.
Delicate linen on the board she laid.
And of her own small shift that cloth was made.
She gave to me a little silvern cup.
And it was her own blood that filled it up.
She took a loaf and gave me bread thereof.
And that was her young body warm with love.

Then, as of some strange mystery aware,
She smiled, and put a rose into her hair.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Carl Busse

1872–

THE QUIET KINGDOM

There is a quiet kingdom's strand,
Like to no other earthly land,
The clouds and winds divide us—
Ah me, and who shall guide us?

It will be found, I say to thee,
By one who yearneth deep as we.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Hugo von Hofmannsthal

1874–

THE TWO

Her hand a goblet bore for him—
Her chin and mouth curved like its rim—
So gentle yet so sure her tread,
No drop was from the goblet shed.

So gentle and so firm his hand:
A tameless steed allured his daring
And with a gesture swift, uncaring
He forced its trembling form to stand.

But when at last from her pale hand
He was to take the cup of gold,
Too heavy for them both it was:
For they so trembled like the grass,
That neither hand the other found
And on the ground the dark wine rolled.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

A VENETIAN NIGHT

All thro' the breathing night there seemed to flow,
Thro' the blue night, strange voices to and fro.
There was no sleep in Nature anywhere.
With dewy lips and deep intake of breath
She lay and listened in the vastness darkling
Of all the web of secret things aware.
And streaming, raining, fell the star-light sparkling
Upon the vigil of the garden there.
And ichor of all heavy fruits was swelling
Under the yellow moon and upward welling
Bubbled the glimmering fountains under trees.
And there awakened heavy harmonies.
And where in haste the clouds' dark shadows glided,
A sound of soft and naked steps abided . . .
Softly I rose—by all the magic drawn—
Then floated through the night a sweet intoning

As of the poignant flute's impassioned moaning
Which in his marble hand in thoughtful wise
By the dark laurel holds the dreamy faun,
Yonder where the deep bed of violets lies.
I saw him in his still, marmoreal gleaming,
With rays of blue and silver o'er him streaming;
And where pomegranates open to the night
I heard the murmur of the bees in flight,
And saw them suck, upon the scarlet sunken,
With ripeness and nocturnal passion drunken.
And when the darkness with low breathing now
Brought all the garden fragrance to my brow,
Over the grass I seemed to hear the trailing
Of long and billowy garments thro' the land,
And feel the warm touch of a gentle hand.
In silken whiteness of moonlight were sailing
Impassioned midges in a maddened dance,
And on the lake lay softest radiance
Swaying in silver of its watery path.
I know not whether swans were plashing there
Or the white limbs of Naiads in their bath,
But lovely odor as of woman's hair
Blended with budding aloes everywhere . . .
And all that splendor met in me and I
Was by excess of beauty overcome
That makes words empty and the senses dumb.

BALLAD OF THE OUTER LIFE

And deep-eyed children cannot long be children,
Knowing of nothing they grow up and die,
And all men go their ways upon the earth.

And bitter fruits are sweetened by and by,
And fall at night like dead birds to the floor,
And in a few days rot even where they lie.

And ever blows the wind, and evermore
A multitude of words we speak and hear,
And now are happy, and now tired and sore.

And roads run through the grass, and towns uprear
Their torch-filled toils, some menacingly live,
And some cadaverously dry and drear.

Why are these built aloft? And ever strive,
So countless many, not to be the same?
And tears drive laughter out till death arrive?

What profits man this ever-changing game?
Full-grown are we, yet still like chartless ships,
And wandering never follow any aim.

What profit hath he who the furthest roams?
And yet he sayeth much who "evening" saith,
A word from which deep melancholy drips

Like heavy honey out of hollow combs.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

MANY INDEED MUST PERISH IN THE KEEL

Many indeed must perish in the keel,
Chained where the heavy oars of vessels smite,
Others direct the rudder on the bridge,
And know the flight of birds and charted stars.

Others with weary limbs lie evermore
By the inextricable roots of life,
For others chairs are with the sibyls set,
The Queens, in whose abode they dwell at home,
With brain untaxed and soft unhampered hands.

But from those lives a shadow falls athwart
On these the lighter, and as to earth and air
The light is with the hard life bound in one.

I cannot free my eyelids from fatigues
Of nations long-forgotten, no, nor guard
My soul in terror from the soundless fall
Of stars remote in deeps of cosmic dark.

Existence plies her shuttle through the woof
Of many fates indissolubly one,
And my own portion of this common life
Is more than taper flame or slender lyre.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

Arno Holz

1863–

A LEAVE-TAKING

His friend the watchman was still awake,
The Town-hall roof one silver flake,
And the moon hung over it.

He scarcely knew what grief he bore,
At every step his heart beat sore,
And his knapsack weighed him down.

The street it was so long, so long,
And he heard a voice singing a song:
When the breeze of the May is blowing!

Now elder boughs o'er the hedgerow nod,
And he sees the marble Mother of God
Standing white at the Minster door.

Here he stood for a moment still,
And heard what the jackdaw whistled shrill
Up above on the steeple cross.

Then the landlord of the Lion Hotel
Put out his lights, and slowly the bell
Of the Minster clock pealed ten.

Everything was, as it used to be,
The nightingale sang on the linden-tree,
And the fountain dreamily ran.

Out of his coat the rose he dashed,
The flower with his stick on the flags he thrashed,
Till the sparks flew, then he went.

The lamp o'er the gateway flickered red,
And the wood into which his pathway led
Stood black in the moonlight there . . .

And where the path the Saints' Stone reaches,
Just where it bends around the beeches,
It all came back to him.

The leaves rustled, he stood and stood:
He stared down where, beneath the wood,
The roofs were glistening.

He saw the house in the garden gleaming,
And this was the end, was the end of the dreaming,
And—the roofs were glistening!

His heart beat wild with piteous pain!
When I come, when I come, when I come back again!

But he never came back any more.

(*Jethro Bithell*)

PHANTASUS

Its roof among the stars projected,
The courtyard throbbed with factory roar,
The common human hive erected,
With hurdy-gurdies at the door.
The dark rat scurried in the basement,
A shop served brandy, grog, and beer,
And to the top-floor's broken casement
Man's wretchedness was native here.

There by his lamp he sat in fever—
Wild scorn of men, speak not at all!
And wrote his songs to last forever,
A dreamer and a prodigal.
Into his garret could be taken
Table and bed—just room for breath·
He was as poor and as forsaken,
As once that God from Nazareth.

And tho' the world, a venal harlot,
Her old taunt: "Crazed and useless!" hissed
A radiant spirit girth with scarlet
His forehead and his eyes had kissed.
And when in lonely awe he wondered
The verse beneath his hand to see,
Forever more from him were sundered
The world in its banality.

His only coat was ripped and tattered,
Dry bread a neighbor's hand would share,
He sighed: O Muse! and nothing mattered,
Of want and misery unaware.
Thus by his lamp he sat in fever,
When day had fled and night would fall,
And wrote his songs to last forever,
A dreamer and a prodigal.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Karl Bulcke

1875–

THERE IS AN OLD CITY

An old town lies afar
From where the great towns be;
The storm roars over the town;
Beside it thunders the sea.

There is an ancient house
Long locked the gate has been.
On its gray walls the trembling
Blades of the grass are green.

There is a lonely heart,
Strange, full of fears,
That town and that house and that heart
Shut in my boyhood's years. . . .

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

Rainer Maria Rilke

1875–1926

FOR, LORD, THE CROWDED CITIES BE . . .

For, Lord, the crowded cities be
Desolate and divided places,
Flight as from flames upon their ways is,
And comfortless of any graces
Their little time fades utterly.
And men who dwell there heavy and humbly move
About dark rooms with dread in all their bearing,
Less than the spring-time flocks in fire and daring;
And somewhere breathes and watches earth for faring,
But they are here and do not know thereof.
And children grow up where the shadows falling
From wall and window have the light exiled,
And know not that without the flowers are calling
Unto a day of distance, wind and wild—
And every child must be a saddened child.
There blossom virgins to the unknown turning
And for their childhood's faded rest are fain
And do not find for what their soul is burning,
And trembling, close their timid buds again.
And bear in chambers shadowed and unsleeping
The days of disappointed motherhood,
And the long night's involuntary weeping,
And the cold years devoid of glow or good.
In utter darkness stand their deathbeds lowly,
For which thro' gradual years the gray heart pants;
And die as tho' in chains, and dying slowly
Go forth from life in guise of mendicants.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

THE YOUTH DREAMS

Oh, I should love to be like one of those
Who thro' the night on tameless horses ride,
With torches like disheveled tresses wide

Which the great wind of gallop streaming blows.
And I would stand as on a shallop's prow,
Slender and tall and like a banner rolled.
Dark but for helmeting of ruddy gold
That glints and gleams. Behind me in a row
Ten men who from the equal darkness glow
With helmets of the changeful gold designed,
Now clear as glass, now dark and old and blind.
And one by me blows me a vision of space
Upon a trumpet glittering that cries,
Or makes a solitary blackness rise
Thro' which as in a rapid dream we race:
The houses slant behind us to their knees,
The crooked streets to meet us bend and strain,
The squares flee from us: but we grapple these,
And still our horses rustle like the rain.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

PRESAGING

I AM like a flag unfurled in space,
I scent the oncoming winds and must bend with them,
While the things beneath are not yet stirring,
While the doors close gently and there is silence in the chimneys
And the windows do not yet tremble and the dust is still heavy—
Then I feel the storm and am vibrant like the sea
And expand and withdraw into myself
And thrust myself forth and am alone in the great storm.

(*Jessie Lemont*)

Hermann Hesse

1877–

SPRING SONG

THE storm cries every night,
Its great, moist wing falters and sweeps,
In dreamy flight the plover falls;
Now nothing sleeps

And through the land stirs new delight,
For the Spring calls.

Oh in these nights I cannot sleep
Youth stirs my heart!
From the blue wells of memory start
The ardent glories of that dawn
And look at me with eyes so deep,
And tremble, and are gone.

Be still, my heart, give o'er!
Though in the heavy blood holds sway
The passionate sweet pain
And lead thee the old paths again—
Unto youth's land no more
Forever goes thy way.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

NIGHT

Often this thought wakens me unawares,
That through the chill of night a vessel fares
Seeking an ocean, touching on a shore
For which my soul must yearn forevermore;
That in still places which no sailor knows
A crimson, undiscovered Northlight glows,
That an unknown and lovely lady's arm
Pulses amid the pillows white and warm;
That one long destined to become my friend
Finds in an alien sea a somber end,
And that my mother, strange and far apart,
Speaks at this hour my name within her heart.

(*Ludwig Lewisohn*)

SCANDINAVIAN

OLD NORSE

From the Elder Edda

c. 1000

The Poetic Edda is the original storehouse of Germanic mythology. It is, indeed, in many ways the greatest literary monument preserved to us out of the antiquity of the kindred races which we call Germanic. The mythological poems include, in the Voluspo, one of the vastest conceptions of the creation and ultimate destruction of the world ever crystallized in literary form.—HENRY ADAMS BELLOWS.

THE FIRST LAY OF GUDRUN

For this is the Great Story of the North, which should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks.—WILLIAM MORRIS.

GUDRUN of old days
Drew near to dying
As she sat in sorrow
Over Sigurd;
Yet she sighed not
Nor smote hand on hand,
Nor wailed she aught
As other women.

Then went earls to her,
Full of all wisdom,
Fain help to deal
To her dreadful heart:
Hushed was Gudrun
Of wail, or greeting,
But with a heavy woe
Was her heart a-breaking.

Bright and fair
Sat the great earls' brides,
Gold arrayed
Before Gudrun;
Each told the tale
Of her great trouble,
The bitterest bale
She erst abode.

Then spake Giaflaug,
Giuki's sister:
"Lo upon earth
I live most loveless
Who of five mates
Must see the ending,
Of daughters twain
And three sisters,
Of brethren eight,
And abide behind lonely."

Naught gat Gudrun
Of wail and greeting,
So heavy was she
For her dead husband,
So dreadful-hearted
For the King laid dead there.

Then spake Herborg
Queen of Hunland—
"Crueler tale
Have I to tell of,
Of my seven sons
Down in the Southlands,
And the eighth man, my mate,
Felled in the death-mead.

"Father and mother,
And four brothers,
On the wide sea

The winds and death played with;
The billows beat
On the bulwark boards.

"Alone must I sing o'er them,
Alone must I array them,
Alone must my hands deal with
Their departing;
And all this was
In one season's wearing,
And none was left
For love or solace.

"Then was I bound
A prey of the battle,
When that same season
Wore to its ending;
As a tiring may
Must I bind the shoon
Of the duke's high dame,
Every day at dawning.

"From her jealous hate
Gat I heavy mocking,
Cruel lashes
She laid upon me,
Never met I
Better master
Or mistress worser
In all the wide world."

Naught gat Gudrun
Of wail or greeting,
So heavy was she
For her dead husband,
So dreadful-hearted
For the King laid dead there.

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—

"O foster-mother,
Wise as thou mayst be,
Naught canst thou better
The young wife's bale."
And she bade uncover
The dead King's corpse.

She swept the sheet
Away from Sigurd,
And turned his cheek
Towards his wife's knees—
Look on thy loved one,
Lay lips to his lips,
E'en as thou wert clinging
To thy king alive yet!"

Once looked Gudrun—
One look only,
And saw her lord's locks
Lying all bloody,
The great man's eyes
Glazed and deadly,
And his heart's bulwark
Broken by sword-edge.

Back then sank Gudrun,
Back on the bolster,
Loosed was her head array,
Red did her cheeks grow,
And the rain-drops ran
Down over her knees.

Then wept Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter,
So that the tears flowed
Through the pillow;
As the geese withal
That were in the homefield,
The fair fowls the may owned,
Fell a-screaming.

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—
"Surely knew I
No love like your love
Among all men,
On the mold abiding;
Naught wouldst thou joy in
Without or within doors,
O my sister,
Save beside Sigurd."

Then spake Gudrun,
Giuki's daughter—
"Such was my Sigurd
Among the sons of Giuki,
As is the king leek
O'er the low grass waxing,
Or a bright stone
Strung on band,
Or a pearl of price
On a prince's brow.
"Once was I counted
By the king's warriors
Higher than any
Of Herjan's mays;
Now am I as little
As the leaf may be,
Amid wind-swept wood
Now when dead he lieth.

"I miss from my seat,
I miss from my bed,
My darling of sweet speech.
Wrought the sons of Giuki,
Wrought the sons of Giuki,
This sore sorrow,
Yea, for their sister,
Most sore sorrow.

"So may your lands
Lie waste on all sides,
As ye have broken
Your bounden oaths!
Ne'er shalt thou, Gunnar,
The gold have joy of,
The dear-bought rings
Shall drag thee to death,
Whereon thou swarest
Oath unto Sigurd.

"Ah, in the days by-gone
Great mirth in the homefield
When my Sigurd
Set saddle on Grani,
And they went their ways
For the wooing of Brynhild!
An ill day, an ill woman,
And most ill hap!"

Then spake Brynhild,
Budli's daughter—
"May the woman lack
Both love and children,
Who gained greeting
For thee, O Gudrun!
Who gave thee this morning
Many words!"

Then spake Gullrond,
Giuki's daughter—
"Hold peace of such words
Thou hated of all folk!
The bane of brave men
Hast thou been ever,
All waves of ill
Wash over thy mind,
To seven great kings
Hast thou been a sore sorrow,

And the death of good will
To wives and women."

Then spake Brynhild,
Budli's daughter—
"None but Atli
Brought bale upon us,
My very brother
Born of Budli.

"When we saw in the hall
Of the Hunnish people
The gold a-gleaming
On the kingly Giukings:
I have paid for that faring
Oft and full,
And for the sight
That then I saw."

By a pillar she stood
And strained its wood to her;
From the eyes of Brynhild,
Budli's daughter,
Flashed out fire,
And she snorted forth venom,
As the sore wounds she gazed on
Of the dead-slain Sigurd.

(*William Morris and Eirikr Magnusson*)

DANISH

Anonymous

14th–16th centuries

BALLADS

The Elected Knight

Sir Oluf he rideth over the plain,
Full seven miles broad and seven miles wide;

But never, ah! never, can meet with the man
  A tilt with him dare ride.

He saw under the hill-side
  A knight full well equipped;
His steel was black, his helm was barred;
  He was riding at full speed.

He wore upon his spurs
  Twelve little golden birds;
Anon in eddies the wild wind blew,
  And there sat all the birds and sang.

He wore upon his mail
  Twelve little golden wheels;
Anon in eddies the wild wind blew,
  And round and round the wheels they flew.

He wore before his breast
  A lance that was poised in rest,
And it was sharper than diamond-stone;
  It made Sir Oluf's heart to groan.

He wore upon his helm
  A wreath of ruddy gold;
And that gave him the Maidens Three,
  The youngest was fair to behold.

Sir Oluf questioned the knight eftsoon
  If he were come from heaven down;
"Art thou Christ of Heaven?" quoth he,
  "So will I yield me unto thee."

"I am not Christ the Great,
  Thou shalt not yield thee yet;
I am an Unknown Knight,
  Three modest Maidens have me bedight."

"Art thou a knight elected?
  And have three maidens thee bedight?
So shalt thou ride a tilt this day,
  For all the maidens' honor!"

The first tilt they together rode,
  They put their steeds to the test;
The second tilt they together rode,
  They proved their manhood best.

The third tilt they together rode,
  Neither of them would yield;
The fourth tilt they together rode,
  They both fell on the field.

Now lie the lords upon the plain,
  And their blood runs unto death;
Now sit the Maidens in the high tower,
  The youngest sorrows till death.

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

The Mer-Man, and Marstig's Daughter

"Now rede me, dear mither, a sonsy rede;
  A sonsy rede swythe rede to me,
How Marstig's daughter I may fa',
  My love and lemman gay to be."

She's made him a steed o' the clear water;
  A saddle and bridle o' sand made she;
She's shap'd him into a knight sae fair,
  Syne into Mary's kirk-yard rade he.

He's tied his steed to the kirk-stile,
  Syne wrang-gates round the kirk gaed he;
When the Mer-man entered the kirk-door,
  Awa the sma' images turned their ee'.

The priest afore the altar stood:
  "O, what for a gude knight may this be?"
The may leugh till hersell, and said,
  "God gif that gude knight were for me!"

The Mer-man he stept o'er ae deas,
  And he has steppit over three:
"O maiden, pledge me faith and troth!
  O Marstig's daughter, gang wi' me!"

And she raught out her lily hand,
  And pledg'd it to the knight sae free:
"Hae; there's my faith and troth, Sir Knight,
  And willingly I'll gang wi' thee."

Out frae the kirk gaed the bridal train,
  And on they danc'd wi' fearless glee;
And down they danc'd unto the strand,
  Till twasome now alane they be:
"O Marstig's daughter, haud my steed,
  And the bonniest ship I'll bigg for thee!"

And whan they came to the white sand,
  To shore the sma' boats turning came;
And whan they came to the deep water,
  The maiden sank in the saut sea faem.

The shriek she shriek'd amang the waves
  Was heard far up upo' the land:
"I rede gude ladies, ane an a',
  They dance wi' nae sic unco man."

(*Robert Jamieson*)

Johannes Evald

1743–1781

KING CHRISTIAN

King Christian stood by the lofty mast
  In mist and smoke;
His sword was hammering so fast
Through Gothic helm and brain it passed;
Then sank each hostile hulk and mast
  In mist and smoke.
"Fly!" shouted they, "fly, he who can!
Who braves of Denmark's Christian
  The stroke?"

Nils Juel gave heed to the tempest's roar;
  Now is the hour!
He hoisted his blood-red flag once more,

And smote upon the foe full sore,
And shouted loud, through the tempest's roar,
"Now is the hour!"
"Fly!" shouted they, "for shelter fly!
Of Denmark's Juel who can defy
The power?"

North Sea! a glimpse of Wessel rent
Thy murky sky!
Then champions to thine arms were sent;
Terror and Death glared where he went;
From the waves was heard a wail that rent
Thy murky sky!
From Denmark thunders Tordenskiol';
Let each to Heaven commend his soul,
And fly!

Path of the Dane to fame and might!
Dark-rolling wave!
Receive thy friend, who, scorning flight,
Goes to meet danger with despite,
Proudly as thou the tempest's might,
Dark-rolling wave!
And, amid pleasures and alarms,
And war and victory, be thine arms
My grave!

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

Jens Baggesen

1764–1826

CHILDHOOD

There was a time when I was very small,
When my whole frame was but an ell in height;
Sweetly, as I recall it, tears do fall,
And therefore I recall it with delight.

I sported in my tender mother's arms,
And rode a-horse-back on best father's knee;
Alike were sorrows, passions, and alarms,
And gold, and Greek, and love, unknown to me.

Then seemed to me this world far less in size,
  Likewise it seemed to me less wicked far;
Like points in heaven, I saw the stars arise,
  And longed for wings that I might catch a star.

I saw the moon behind the island fade,
  And thought, "O, were I on that island there,
I could find out of what the moon is made,
  Find out how large it is, how round, how fair!"

Wondering, I saw God's sun, through western skies,
  Sink in the ocean's golden lap at night,
And yet upon the morrow early rise,
  And paint the eastern heaven with crimson light;

And thought of God, the gracious Heavenly Father,
  Who made me, and that lovely sun on high,
And all those pearls of heaven thick-strung together,
  Dropped, clustering, from his hand o'er all the sky.

With childish reverence, my young lips did say
  The prayer my pious mother taught to me:
"O gentle God! O, let me strive alway
  Still to be wise, and good, and follow thee!"

So prayed I for my father and my mother,
  And for my sister, and for all the town;
The king I knew not, and the beggar-brother,
  Who, bent with age, went, sighing, up and down.

They perished, the blithe days of boyhood perished,
  And all the gladness, all the peace I knew!
Now have I but their memory, fondly cherished;—
  God! may I never, never lose that too!

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

NORWEGIAN

Henrik Arnold Thaulov Wergeland

1808–1845

THE WALL-FLOWER

O Wall-flower! or ever thy bright leaves fade,
My limbs will be that of which all are made,
Before ever thou losest thy crown of gold,
My flesh will be mold.

And yet open the casement! till I am dead
Let my last look rest on thy golden head!
My soul would kiss thee before it flies
To the open skies.

Twice I am kissing thy fragrant mouth,
And the first kiss wholly is thine, in truth;
But the second remember, dear Love! to close
On my fair white Rose.

I shall not be living its Spring to see;
But bring it my greeting when that shall be,
And say that I wish'd that upon my grave
It should bloom and wave.

Yes, say that I wish'd that against my breast
The Rose should lie that thy lips caress'd;
And, Wall-flower! do thou into Death's dark porch
Be its bridal torch!

(*Sir Edmund Gosse*)

Henrik Ibsen

1828–1906

IN THE ORCHARD

In the sunny orchard closes,
While the warblers sing and swing,

Care not whether blustering Autumn
  Break the promises of Spring!
Rose and white, the apple blossom
  Hides you from the sultry sky—
Let it flutter, blown and scatter'd,
  On the meadows by-and-by!

Will you ask about the fruitage
  In the season of the flowers?
Will you murmur, will you question,
  Count the run of weary hours?
Will you let the scarecrow clapping
  Drown all happy sounds and words?
Brothers! there is better music
  In the singing of the birds.

From your heavy-laden garden
  Will you hunt the mellow thrush;
He will play you for protection
  With his crown-song's liquid rush.
O but you will win the bargain,
  Though your fruit be spare and late,
For remember Time is flying
  And will shut the garden gate.

With my living, with my singing,
  I will tear the hedges down.
Sweep the grass and heap the blossom!
  Let it shrivel, pale and brown!
Swing the wicket! Sheep and cattle,
  Let them graze among the best!
I broke off the flowers; what matter
  Who may revel with the rest?

(*Sir Edmund Gosse*)

Björnsterne Björnson

1832–1910

THE BOY AND THE FLUTE

THROUGH the forest the boy wends all day long:
For there he has heard such a wonderful song.
He carved him a flute of the willow-tree,
And tried what the tune within it might be.
The tune came out of it sad and gay;
But while he listen'd it pass' away.
He fell asleep, and once more it sung,
And over his forehead it lovingly hung.

He thought he would catch it, and wildly woke;
And the tune in the pale night faded and broke.
"O God! my God! take me up to Thee!
For the tune Thou hast made is consuming me."
And the Lord God said: "'Tis a friend divine,
Though never one hour shalt thou hold it thine.
Yet all other music is poor and thin
By the side of this which thou never shalt win!".

(*Sir Edmund Gosse*)

SWEDISH

Gustav Rosenhane

1619–1684

SONNETS

I

DEEP in a vale where rocks on every side
  Shut out the winds, and scarcely let the sun
  Between them dart his rays down one by one,
Where all was still and cool in summer-tide,
And softly, with her whispering waves that sighed,
  A little river, that had scarce begun
  Her silver course, made bold to fleet and run

Down leafy falls to woodlands dense and wide,
There stood a tiny plain, just large enow
  To give small mountain-folk right room to dance,
  With oaks and limes and maples ringed around;
Hither I came, and viewed its turf askance,
  Its solitude with beauty seemed a-glow,—
  My Love had walked there and 'twas holy ground!

II

And then I sat me down, and gave the rein
  To my wild thoughts, till many a song that rang
  From boughs around where hidden warblers sang
Recalled me from myself; then "Oh! in vain"
I said, "do these outpour the tender strain?
  Can these sweet birds that with such airs harangue
  Their feathered loves, like me, feel sorrow's pang?
Ah! would that I, like them, had pinions twain!
Straight would I fly to her whom I love best,
  Nor vainly warbling in the woodland sing,
But chirp my prayer, and preen my plumèd crest,
  And to this spot once more her beauty bring,
  And flutter round her flight with supple wing,
And lead her to my secret leafy nest."

(*Sir Edmund Gosse*)

Olof Wexionius

1656–1690

ON THE DEATH OF A PIOUS LADY

The earthly roses at God's call have made
  Way, lady, for a dress of heavenly white,
  In which thou walk'st with other figures bright,
Once loved on earth, who now, like thee arrayed,
Feast on two-fold ambrosia, wine and bread;
  They lead thee up by sinuous paths of light
  Through lilied fields that sparkle in God's sight,
And crown thee with delights that never fade.
O thou thrice-sainted mother, in that bliss,

Forget not thy two daughters, whom a kiss
  At parting left as sad as thou art glad;
In thy deep joy think how for thee they weep,
Or conjure through the shifting glass of sleep
  The saint heaven hath, the mother once they had.

(*Sir Edmund Gosse*)

Esaias Tegner

1782–1846

Frithiof's Farewell

"No more shall I see
  In its upward motion
The smoke of the Northland. Man is a slave;
  The Fates decree
  On the waste of the ocean,
There is my fatherland, there is my grave.

"Go not to the strand,
  Ring, with thy bride,
After the stars spread their light through the sky.
  Perhaps in the sand,
  Washed up by the tide,
The bones of the outlawed Viking may lie.

"Then quoth the king,
  ' 'T is mournful to hear
A man like a whimpering maiden cry,
  The death-song they sing
  Even now in mine ear.
What avails it? He who is born must die.' "

(*H. W. Longfellow*)

RUSSIAN

Folk Songs

THE PLAINT OF THE WIFE

THE WIFE

Fain would I be sleeping, dreaming:
Heavy lies my head upon the pillow.
Up and down the passage goes my husband's father,
Angrily about it keeps he pacing.

CHORUS

Thumping, scolding, thumping, scolding,—
Never lets his daughter sleep.

FATHER-IN-LAW

Up, up, up, thou sloven there!
Up, up, up, thou sluggard there!
Slovenly, slatternly, sluggardish slut!

THE WIFE

Fain would I be sleeping, dreaming:
Heavy lies my head upon the pillow.
Up and down the passage goes my husband's mother,
Angrily about it keeps she pacing.

CHORUS

Thumping, scolding, thumping, scolding,—
Never lets her daughter sleep.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

Up, up, up, thou sloven there!
Up, up, up, thou sluggard there!
Slovenly, slatternly, sluggardish slut!

THE WIFE

Fain would I be sleeping, dreaming:
Heavy lies my head upon the pillow.
Up and down the passage steals my well-beloved One,—
All so lightly, softly, keeps he whispering.

THE LOVER

Sleep, sleep, sleep, my darling One!
Sleep, sleep, sleep, my precious One!
Driven out, thrown away, married too soon!

(*W. R. S. Ralston*)

Ivan Andreevich Kriloff

1768–1844

THE PEASANT AND THE SHEEP

A PEASANT haled a sheep to court,
And pressed against her there a serious objection.
A fox, as judge, is ready for a fault's detection,
Hears plaintiff first and, then, defendant in retort;
Taking in turn each point, and cool, though others stammer,
He seeks the cause of all the clamor.
The peasant says:—"My lord! when visiting my yard,
I found two chickens missing; 'twas in early morning;
Only their bones and feathers served me as a warning;
This sheep alone was there on guard!"
The sheep replies:—"No strange event my slumbers marred;
Prithee, the evidence of neighbors don't discard;
Against me ne'er was brought a charge of thieving
Or other crime
At any time;
As to my tasting flesh, 'tis notion past conceiving."
Here are the fox's judgments from their earliest weaving:—

"I noway can accept the pleadings of this sheep,
Because all rogues are skilled to keep
Their wicked purposes from others.
'Tis clear from plaintiff's words that, on the given night,
Defendant held the fowl-house well in sight;
Now, who can think she smothers
An inborn wish for viands choice?
So I decide, by conscience' sacred voice,
She cannot have admitted
Hens were for her unfitted!
Her guilt is clear and lets the peasant win;
The carcase comes to me, and he will get the skin."

(*C. Fillingham Coxwell*)

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

1799–1837

He is placed in the company of Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe by his compatriots. The intensity of his passionate nature was governed by a wide intelligence, a capacity for detachment, and above all by a sense of measure and harmony.—Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky.

MESSAGE TO SIBERIA

Deep in the Siberian mine,
Keep your patience proud;
The bitter toil shall not be lost,
The rebel thought unbowed.

The sister of misfortune, Hope,
In the under-darkness dumb
Speaks joyful courage to your heart:
The day desired will come.

And love and friendship pour to you
Across the darkened doors,
Even as round your galley-beds
My free music pours.

The heavy-hanging chains will fall,
The walls will crumble at a word;
And Freedom greet you in the light,
And brothers give you back the sword.

(*Max Eastman*)

WORK

Here is the long-bided hour: the labor of years is accomplished.
Why should this sadness unplumbed secretly weigh on my heart?
Is it, my work being done, I stand like a laborer, useless,
One who has taken his pay, a stranger to tasks that are new?
Is it the work I regret, the silent companion of midnight,
Friend of the golden-haired Dawn, friend of the gods of the hearth?

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

THE PROPHET

Athirst in spirit, through the gloom
Of an unpeopled waste I blundered,
And saw a six-winged Seraph loom
Where the two pathways met and sundered.
He laid his fingers on my eyes:
His touch lay soft as slumber lies,—
And like an eagle's, his crag shaken,
Did my prophetic eyes awaken.
Upon my ears his fingers fell
And sound rose,—stormy swell on swell:
I heard the spheres revolving, chiming,
The angels in their soaring sweep,
The monsters moving in the deep,
The green vine in the valley climbing.
And from my mouth the Seraph wrung
Forth by its roots my sinful tongue;
The evil things and vain it babbled

His hand drew forth and so effaced,
And the wise serpent's tongue he placed
Between my lips with hand blood-dabbled;
And with a sword he clove my breast,
Plucked out the heart he made beat higher,
And in my stricken bosom pressed
Instead a coal of living fire.
Upon the wastes, a lifeless clod,
I lay, and heard the voice of God:
"Arise, oh, prophet, watch and hearken,
And with my Will thy soul engird,
Roam the gray seas, the roads that darken,
And burn men's hearts with this, my Word."

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov

1814–1841

This brilliant bully and egotistic rake was, after his own fashion, a knight of the Grail and a poetic genius such as rarely graces any language.—BABETTE DEUTSCH and AVRAHAM YARMOLINSKY.

DAGGER

I LOVE you well, my steel-white dagger,
Comrade luminous and cold;
Forged by a Georgian dreaming vengeance,
Whetted by Circassians bold.

A tender hand, in grace of parting,
Gave you to mark a meeting brief;
For blood there glimmered on your metal
A shining tear—the pearl of grief.

And black eyes, clinging to my glances,
Filled deep with liquid sorrow seemed;
Like your clear blade where flame is trembling,
They darkened quickly and they gleamed.

You were to be my long companion.
Give me your counsel to the end!

I will be hard of soul and faithful,
Like you, my iron-hearted friend!

(*Max Eastman*)

A SAIL

WHITE is the sail and lonely
  On the misty infinite blue;
Flying from what in the homeland?
  Seeking for what in the new?

The waves romp, and the winds whistle,
  And the mast leans and creaks;
Alas! He flies not from fortune,
  And no good fortune he seeks.

Beneath him the stream, luminous, azure,
  Above him the sun's golden breast;
But he, a rebel, invites the storms,
  As though in the storms were rest.

(*Max Eastman*)

THE MOUNTAIN

A GOLDEN cloud slept for her pleasure
All night on the gaunt hill's breast;
Light-heart to her play-ground of azure,
How early she sped from the nest.

But the soft moist trace of her sleeping
Lay in the folds of the hill.
He pondered; his tears are creeping
Down to the desert still.

(*Max Eastman*)

THE REED

THERE sat a happy fisherman
Upon a river bank.
Before him on the wind's wings
Tall reeds swayed rank on rank.

He cut him down a dry reed,
He pierced it through and through,
Then pinched one end together,
And in the other blew.

As if to life awaking,
The reed to speak began.
Was it the wind's voice calling
Or was it voice of man?

The reed sang slow and sadly—
"Oh let me, let me be,
Oh happy, happy fisherman,
For you are killing me.

"I was a comely maiden
With life and joy aglow.
In my step-mother's house
I flowered long ago.

"And many tears and bitter
I innocently shed,
And often in the darkness
I wished that I was dead.

"She had a son beloved
Of her and none besides,
Who frightened honest people
And ravished girlish brides.

"And once we went at evening
Upon the steep high shore
To look upon the sunset
And hear the waters roar.

"He gave me gold and silver—
I would not take his gold.
He asked me for my true love—
My heart grew sad and cold.

"Then in my soft young bosom
His heavy knife-blade sank,
And here my corpse he buried
Upon the river bank.

"Out of my stricken bosom
A great dry reed uprose,
And in it live my dolor,
My pain and all my woes.

"Oh happy, happy fisherman,
Pray let me, let me be,
Or have you never suffered
And tasted misery?"

(*J. J. Robbins*)

Ivan Savvich Nikitin

1824–1861

A NIGHT IN A VILLAGE

Sultry air, the smoke of shavings,
  Dirt spread over all,
Feet and benches dirty; cobwebs
  To adorn the wall:
Smoke-begrimed each cottage chamber;
  Bread and water stale;
Spinners coughing, children crying—
  Want and woe prevail.
Hand to mouth lifelong they labor,
  Then a pauper's grave—
Ah! what need to learn the lesson—
  "Trust, my soul, be brave!"

(*P. E. Matheson*)

Fyodor Sologub

1863–

THE AMPHORA

In a gay jar upon his shoulder
The slave morosely carries wine.

His road is rough with bog and bowlder,
And in the sky no planets shine.
Into the dark with ſtabbing glances
He peers, his careful ſteps are slow,
Leſt on his breaſt as he advances
The ſtaining wine should overflow.
I bear my amphora of sorrow,
Long brimming with the wine it hides;
There poison for each waiting morrow
Ferments within the painted sides.
I follow secret ways and hidden
To guard the evil vessel, leſt
A careless touch should pour unbidden
Its bitterness upon my breaſt.

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

Vyacheslav Ivanov

1866–

THE HOLY ROSE

The holy Rose her leaves will soon unfold.
The tender bud of dawn already lies
Reddening on the wide, transparent skies.
Love's ſtar is a white sail the ſtill seas hold.
Here in the light-soaked space above the wold,
Through the descending dew the arches rise
Of the unseen cathedral, filled with cries
From the winged weavers threading it with gold.

Here on the hill, the cypress, in accord
With me, ſtands praying: a cowled eremite.
And on the rose's cheeks the tears fall light.
Upon my cell the patterned rays are poured.
And in the Eaſt, the purple vines bleed bright,
And seething overflow. . . . Hosanna, Lord!

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

Ivan Bunin

1870–

FLAX

She sits on tumulus Savoor, and stares,
Old woman Death, upon the crowded road.
Like a blue flame the small flax-flower flares
Thick through the meadows sowed.

And says old woman Death: "Hey, traveler!
Does any one want linen, linen fit
For funeral wear? A shroud, madam or sir,
I'll take cheap coin for it!"

And says serene Savoor: "Don't crow so loud!
Even the winding-sheet is dust, and cracks
And crumbles into earth, that from the shroud
May spring the sky-blue flax."

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

Valery Bryusov

1873–1924

RADIANT RANKS OF SERAPHIM

Radiant ranks of seraphim
Stir the air about our bed.
With their windy wings and dim
Our hot cheeks are comforted.

Low the circling seraphs bend,
And we tremble and rejoice
At hosannas that ascend,
Winged with their unearthly voice.

Cloudy luminous faces hover,
And the wing-swept candles wane.
And our fiery breasts they cover
As with hidden holy rain.

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

Alexander Blok

1880–1921

RUSSIA

To sin, unshamed, to lose, unthinking,
The count of careless nights and days,
And then, while the head aches with drinking,
Steal to God's house, with eyes that glaze;

Thrice to bow down to earth, and seven
Times cross oneself beside the door,
With the hot brow, in hope of heaven,
Touching the spittle-covered floor;

With a brass farthing's gift dismissing
The offering, the holy Name
To mutter with loose lips, in kissing
The ancient, kiss-worn icon-frame;

And coming home, then, to be tricking
Some wretch out of the same small coin,
And with an angry hiccup, kicking
A lean cur in his trembling groin;

And where the icon's flame is quaking
Drink tea, and reckon loss and gain,
From the fat chest of drawers taking
The coupons wet with spittle-stain;

And sunk in feather-beds to smother
In slumber, such as bears may know,—
Dearer to me than every other
Are you, my Russia, even so.

(*Babette Deutsch and Avraham Yarmolinsky*)

ENGLISH

Anonymous

c. 1250

SUMER IS ICUMEN IN

Sumer is icumen in,
  Lhude sing cuccu;
Groweth sed and bloweth med
  And springth the wude nu.
    Sing cuccu!

Awe bleteth after lomb,
  Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth,
  Murie sing cuccu.

Cuccu, cuccu, wel
  Singes thu, cuccu:
  Na swike thu naver nu;
Sing cuccu, nu,
  Sing cuccu,
  Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu.

Geoffrey Chaucer

1340?–1400

BALADE

From The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women

Hyd, Absolon, they gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Thy faire bodye, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle in-fere,
Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of your trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ne pleyne;
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Anonymous

16th–17th centuries

BALLADS

Sir Patrick Spens

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
  Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
  To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
  Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor,
  That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
  And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
  Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
  A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
  The teir blinded his ee.

"O what is this has don this deid,
  This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
  To sail upon the se!

"Mak haſt, mak haſte, my mirry men all,
  Our guid schip sails the morne:"
"O say na sae, my maſter deir,
  For I feir a deadlie ſtorme.

"Late late yeſtreen I saw the new moone,
  Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir maſter,
  That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
  To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
  Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
  Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
  Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies ſtand,
  Wi thair gold kems in their hairs,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
  For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
  It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
  Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

The Wife of Usher's Well

1. There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
    And a wealthy wife was she;
  She had three ſtout and ſtalwart sons,
    And sent them oer the sea.

2. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

3. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word came to the carlin wife
That her sons she'd never see.

4. "I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood."

5. It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.

6. It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

* * * * *

7. "Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

8. And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

* * * * *

9. Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

10. The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngeſt to the eldeſt said,
"Brother, we muſt awa.

11. "The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin worm doth chide;
Gin we be miſt out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

12. "Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

Bonny Barbara Allan

1. It was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Græme, in the Weſt Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

2. He sent his man down through the town,
To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haſte and come to my maſter dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

3. O hooly, hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

4. "O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan:"
"O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

5. "O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?"

6. He turnd his face unto the wall,
   And death was with him dealing:
   "Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
   And be kind to Barbara Allan."

7. And slowly, slowly raise she up,
   And slowly, slowly left him,
   And sighing said, she could not stay,
   Since death of life had reft him.

8. She had not gane a mile but twa,
   When she heard the dead-bell ringing,
   And every jow that the dead-bell geid,
   It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

9. "O mother, mother, make my bed!
   O make it saft and narrow!
   Since my love died for me to-day,
   I'll die for him to-morrow."

Lord Randal

1. "O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
   O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"
   "I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,
   For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

2. "Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
   Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome, young man?"
   "I din'd wi my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
   For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

3. "What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
   What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"
   "I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my bed soon,
   For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

4. "What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"
"O they swelld and they died; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

5. "O I fear ye are poison'd, Lord Randal, my son!
O I fear ye are poisond, my handsome young man!"
"O yes! I am poisond; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."

Edmund Spenser

1552–1599

AMORETTI

LXX

Fresh Spring, the herald of loves mighty king,
In whose cote-armor richly are displayd
All sorts of flowers the which on earth do spring,
In goodly colors gloriously arrayd,
Goe to my love, where she is carelesse layd,
Yet in her winters bowre, not well awake;
Tell her the joyous time wil not be ſtaid,
Unlesse she doe him by the forelock take:
Bid her therefore her selfe soone ready make,
To wayt on Love amongſt his lovely crew,
Where every one that misseth then her make
Shall be by him amearſt with penance dew.
Make haſt therefore, sweet love, whileſt it is prime;
For none can call againe the passèd time.

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the ſtrand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.

Vayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay,
A mortall thing so to immortalize,
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,
And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize.
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devize
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the hevens wryte your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall al the world subdew,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

LXXIX

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it,
For that your selfe ye dayly such doe see:
But the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit,
And vertuous mind, is much more praysd of me.
For all the rest, how ever fayre it be,
Shall turne to nought and loose that glorious hew:
But onely that is permanent and free
From frayle corruption, that doth flesh ensew.
That is true beautie: that doth argue you
To be divine and borne of heavenly seed:
Deriv'd from that fayre Spirit, from whom al true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed.
He onely fayre, and what he fayre hath made,
All other fayre lyke flowres untymely fade.

Sir Philip Sidney

1554–1586

A DITTY

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—
I sought fit words to paint the blackeſt face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's ſtay;
Invention, nature's child, fled ſtep-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet ſtill seemed but ſtrangers' in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite;
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

XXXI

With how sad ſteps, O Moon, thou climb'ſt the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'ſt a lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy ſtate descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is conſtant love deemed there but want of wit?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Michael Drayton

1563–1631

From IDEA

Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part!
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows;
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows,
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lie,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

Christopher Marlowe

1564–1593

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-linéd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

William Shakespeare

1564–1616

SONNETS

XII

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves
Borne on the bier with the white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defense
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanéd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

XXXIII

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;

Anon permit the baſeſt clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celeſtial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to weſt with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no wit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may ſtain when heaven's sun ſtaineth.

LIV

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odor which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfuméd tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their maskéd buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwooed and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweeteſt odors made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse diſtills your truth.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept ſtone besmeared with sluttish time.
When waſtful war shall ſtatues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainſt death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall ſtill find room

Even in the eyes of all poſterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LXIV

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud coſt of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing ſtore with loss and loss with ſtore;
When I have seen such interchange of ſtate,
Or ſtate itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

LXV

Since brass, nor ſtone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no ſtronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Againſt the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so ſtout,
Nor gates of ſteel so ſtrong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation; where, alack,
Shall Time's beſt jewel from Time's cheſt lie hid?
Or what ſtrong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may ſtill shine bright.

LXVI

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabléd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly doctor-like controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou see'ſt the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the weſt,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in reſt.
In me thou see'ſt the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it muſt expire
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiveſt, which makes thy love more ſtrong,
To love that well which thou muſt leave ere long.

XC

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:
Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me laſt,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come: so shall I taſte
At firſt the very worſt of fortune's might,
And other ſtrains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

XCVII

How like a winter hath my absense been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time removed was summer's time,
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem to me

But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

XCVIII

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April dressed in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odor and in hue
Could make me any summer's ſtory tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter ſtill, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

CVI

When in the chronicle of waſted time
I see descriptions of the faireſt wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's beſt,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you maſter now
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVII

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXXIX

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight:

Paſt reason hunted, and no sooner had
Paſt reason hated, as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in queſt to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

CXXX

My miſtress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why they her breaſts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my miſtress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My miſtress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

CXLVI

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array,
Why doſt thou pine within and suffer death,
Painting thy outward walls so coſtly gay?
Why so large coſt, having so short a lease,
Doſt thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy ſtore;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;

Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

SONGS FROM THE PLAYS

From Love's Labor's Lost

When icicles hang by the wall,
  And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
  And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-who!" a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
  And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
  And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-who!" a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

From Much Ado About Nothing

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
  Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
  To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
  And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
  Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
  Of dumps so dull and heavy!
The fraud of men was ever so,
  Since summer first was leavy:

Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

From As You Like It

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet birds' throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:

Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! etc.

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That oe'r the green corn-field did pass
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In spring time, etc.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower
In spring time, etc.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crownèd with the prime
In spring time, etc.

From TWELFTH NIGHT

O MISTRESS mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear, your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:

In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
  Youth's a ſtuff will not endure.

From MEASURE FOR MEASURE

TAKE, O, take those lips away,
  That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
  Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again,
                Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
                Sealed in vain.

From CYMBELINE

HARK, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
  And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His ſteeds to water at those springs
  On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
  To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
  My lady sweet, arise;
    Arise, arise.

FEAR no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task haſt done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all muſt,
As chimney-sweepers, come to duſt.

Fear no more the frowns o' the great;
  Thou art paſt the tyrant's ſtroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
  To thee the reed is as the oak:
The scepter, learning, psychic, muſt
All follow this, and come to duſt.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
  Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
  Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
  Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renownèd be thy grave!

From The Tempest

Full fathom five thy father lies;
  Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
  Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
                Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong, bell.

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

Ben Jonson

1573–1637

HYMN TO DIANA

From Cynthia's Revels

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
  Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
  State in wonted manner keep:
    Hesperus entreats thy light,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
  Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
  Heaven to clear when day did close:
    Bless us then with wished sight,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
  And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
  Space to breathe, how short soever:
    Thou that mak'st a day of night—
    Goddess excellently bright!

SONG TO CELIA

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
  And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
  And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
  Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
  I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
  Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
  It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didſt only breathe,
  And sent'ſt it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
  Not of itself but thee.

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

From Epicœne; or, The Silent Woman

Still to be neat, ſtill to be dressed,
As you were going to a feaſt;
Still to be powdered, ſtill perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet negleſt more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art;
They ſtrike mine eyes, but not my heart.

John Donne

1573–1631

SONG

Go and catch a falling ſtar,
  Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all paſt years are,
  Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear a mermaid's singing,
  Or to keep off envy's ſtinging,
    And find
    What wind
Serves to advance an honeſt mind.

If thou be'ſt born to ſtrange sights,
  Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights,
  Till Age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'ſt, wilt tell me
All ſtrange wonders that befell thee,
      And swear
      No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'ſt one, let me know;
  Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not; I would not go,
  Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And laſt till you write your letter,
      Yet she
      Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

LOVE'S DEITY

I LONG to talk with some old lover's ghoſt
  Who died before the god of love was born.
I cannot think that he who then loved moſt,
  Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a deſtiny
And that vice-nature, cuſtom, lets it be,
  I muſt love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god, meant not so much,
  Nor he in his young godhead practiced it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
  His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
  Love, till I love her who loves me.

But every modern god will not extend
  His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
  All is the purlieu of the god of love.
O! were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be
  I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
  As though I felt the worst that love could do?
Love may make me leave loving, or might try
  A deeper plague, to make her love me too;
Which, since she loves before, I'm loth to see.
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
  If she whom I love, should love me.

THE FUNERAL

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
    Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
    For 'tis my outward soul,
Viceroy to that which, unto heav'n being gone,
    Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
    Through every part
Can tie those parts, and make me one of all;
Those hairs, which upward grew, and strength and art
    Have from a better brain,
Can better do 't: except she meant that I
    By this should know my pain,
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemned to die.

Whate'er she meant by 't, bury it with me,
    For since I am

Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry
If into other hands these reliques came
As 't was humility
To afford to it all that a soul can do,
So 't is some bravery
That, since you would have none of me, I bury some of you.

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done;
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done;
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself that at my death thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

Richard Barnefield

1574–1627

THE NIGHTINGALE

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made.

Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring;
Every thing did banish moan
Save the Nighingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;
Teru, teru, by and by;
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah! thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee:
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapped in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing:
Even so, poor bird, like thee
None alive will pity me.

John Fletcher

1579–1625

ASPATIA'S SONG

From The Maid's Tragedy

Lay a garland on my hearse
  Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
  Say I diéd true.

My love was false, but I was firm
  From my hour of birth;
Upon my buried body lie
  Lightly, gently earth!

George Wither

1588–1667

THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die, because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May,
    If she think not well of me,
    What care I how fair she be?

Shall my silly heart be pined,
'Cause I see a woman kind?
Or a well disposèd nature
Joinèd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder, than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
    If she be not so to me,
    What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well deserving known
Make me quite forget my own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of Best
    If she be not such to me,
    What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind,
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do
That without them dares her woo;
    And unless that mind I see,
    What care I how great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she loves me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn, and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

William Browne

1590?–1645?

ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair, and learned, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name: in after days,
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

Robert Herrick

1591–1674

AN ODE FOR BEN JONSON

Ah, Ben!
Say how, or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun?

Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.

My Ben!
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it,
Lest we that talent spend;
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me!

SWEET DISORDER

A SWEET disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction—
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher—
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly—
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat—
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility—
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

GRACE FOR A CHILD

HERE a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all. Amen.

TO THE VIRGINS TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may,
  Old Time's still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
  To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
  The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
  And nearer he's to setting.

That age is bleſt which is the firſt,
  When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worſt
  Times ſtill succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
  And while ye may, go marry;
For, having loſt but once your prime,
  You may forever tarry.

George Herbert

1593–1633

VIRTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
  The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
  For thou muſt die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
  Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
  And thou muſt die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
  A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
  And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
  Like seasoned timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal,
  Then chiefly lives.

PEACE

Sweet Peace, where doſt thou dwell? I humbly crave,
Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
And ask'd, if Peace were there,
A hollow wind did seem to answer, No:
Go seek elsewhere.

I did; and going did a rainbow note:
Surely, thought I,
This is the lace of Peace's coat:
I will search out the matter.
But while I lookt the clouds immediately
Did break and scatter.

Then went I to a garden and did spy
A gallant flower,
The crown Imperiall: Sure, said I,
Peace at the root muſt dwell.
But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devoure
What show'd so well.

At length I met a rev'rend good old man;
Whom when for Peace
I did demand, he thus began:
There was a Prince of old
At Salem dwelt, who liv'd with good increase
Of flock and fold.

He sweetly liv'd; yet sweetnesse did not save
His life from foes.
But after death out of his grave
There sprang twelve ſtalks of wheat;
Which many wondring at, got some of those
To plant and set.

It prosper'd ſtrangely, and did soon disperse
Through all the earth:

For they that taſte it do rehearse,
That vertue lies therein;
A secret vertue, bringing peace and mirth
By flight of sinne.

Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,
And grows for you;
Make bread of it: and that repose
And peace, which ev'ry where
With so much earneſtness you do pursue
Is onely there.

THE COLLAR

I STRUCK the board, and cried, "No more;
I will abroad!
What, shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as ſtore.
Shall I be ſtill in suit?
Have I no harveſt but a thorn
To let me blood, and not reſtore
What I have loſt with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it;
Is the year only loſt to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay; all blaſted,
All waſted?
Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
And thou haſt hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands
Which petty thoughts have made; and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,

While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there, tie up thy fears:
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."
But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child";
And I replied, "My Lord."

Thomas Carew

1594?–1639

DISDAIN RETURNED

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires;
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts, and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires.
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

No tears, Celia, now shall win
My resolved heart to return;
I have searched that soul within,
And find nought but pride and scorn:
I have learned thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou.
Some power in my revenge convey
That love to her I cast away.

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day,
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light
That downwards fall in dead of night,
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixèd become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phœnix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

James Shirley

1596–1666

A DIRGE

From The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
    Scepter and crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
  They tame but one another still:
    Early or late
    They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
  See where the victor-victim bleeds:
    Your heads must come
    To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

William Davenant

1606–1668

SONG

The lark now leaves his watery nest,
  And climbing shakes his dewy wings.
He takes this window for the East,
  And to implore your light he sings—
Awake, awake; the morn will never rise
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
  The plowman from the sun his season takes;
But still the lover wonders what they are
  Who look for day before his mistress wakes.
Awake, awake! break through your veils of lawn!
Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn!

Edmund Waller

1606–1687

GO LOVELY ROSE!

Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die; that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

ON A GIRDLE

That which her slender waist confined,
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer,
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move!

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair!
Give me but what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round!

John Milton

1608–1674

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favor *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,

We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the ſtar that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his weſtering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound that would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
  But, oh; the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never muſt return!
Thee, Shepherd, the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or froſt to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
  Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed oe'r the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the ſteep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard ſtream.
Ay me! I fondly dream,
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have
    done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the ſtream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
  Alas! what boots it with uncessant care

To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And ſtrictly mediate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That laſt infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burſt out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the gliſtering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfeſt witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces laſtly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expeſt thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That ſtrain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And liſtens to the Herald of the Sea
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And queſtioned every guſt of rugged wings,
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his ſtory;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blaſt was from his dungeon ſtrayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panopé with all her siſters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,

His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! what hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned ought else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alphëus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameled eyes
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,

The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide,
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
  Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossow shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

TO MR. H. LAWES ON HIS AIRS

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long,

Thy word and skill exempts thee from the throng,
  With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
  To after age thou shalt be writ the man
  That with smooth air couldſt humor beſt our tongue.
Thou honor'ſt Verse, and Verse muſt lend her wing
  To honor thee, the prieſt of Phœbus' quire,
  That tuneſt their happieſt lines in hymn or ſtory.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
  Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
  Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

TO MR. LAWRENCE

Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son,
  Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
  Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
  Help waſte a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
  On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
  The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
  The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repaſt shall feaſt us, light and choice,
  Of Attic taſte, with wine, whence we may rise
  To hear the lute well touched or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
  He who of those delights can judge, and spare
  To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, leſt He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Sir John Suckling

1609–1642

WHY SO PALE AND WAN?

From Aglaura

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
  Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
  Looking ill prevail?
  Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
  Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
  Saying nothing do 't?
  Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;
  This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
  Nothing can make her:
  The devil take her!

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it, I have loved
  Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
  If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
  Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
  Such a constant lover.

But the spite on 't is, no praise
  Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays,
  Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
  And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
  A dozen dozen in her place.

Richard Lovelace

1618–1658

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconſtancy is such
  As thou too shalt adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
  Loved I not honor more.

TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON

When Love with unconfinèd wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
  And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
  With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
  Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirſty grief in wine we ſteep,
  When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep
  Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
  With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majeſty,
  And glories of my king;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlarged winds, that curl the flood,
  Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for an hermitage;

If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

Andrew Marvell

1621–1678

THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze,
To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
And their incessant labors see
Crowned from some single herb or tree
Whose short and narrow-vergèd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid,
While all the flowers and trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.
Little, alas! they know or heed,
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wherees'e'er your bark I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race;

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;—
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas,
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skillful gardener drew
Of flowers, and herbs, this dial new;
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run,
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we!
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews;
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
  But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near,
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,

And your quaint honor turn to duſt,
And into ashes all my luſt:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
  Now, therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with inſtant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our ſtrength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough ſtrife
Through the iron gates of life;
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand ſtill, yet we will make him run.

Henry Vaughan

1622–1695

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I underſtood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celeſtial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my firſt love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of his bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound.

Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
  O, how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

John Dryden

1631–1700

TO THE MEMORY OF MR. OLDHAM

Farewell, too little, and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own:
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mold with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorr'd alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive;
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
While his young friend perform'd and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Thro' the harsh cadence of a rugged line:
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betray'd.

Thy generous fruits, tho' gather'd ere their prime,
Still shew'd a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of
rhyme.
Once more, hail and farewell; farewell, thou young,
But ah too short, Marcellus of our tongue;
Thy brows with ivy, and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

SONG

From Amphitryon

Fair Iris I love, and hourly I die,
But not for a lip, nor a languishing eye:
She's fickle and false, and there we agree,
For I am as false and as fickle as she.
We neither believe what either can say;
And, neither believing, we neither betray.
'Tis civil to swear, and say things of course;
We mean not the taking for better or worse.
When present, we love; when absent, agree:
I think not of Iris, nor Iris of me.
The legend of love no couple can find,
So easy to part, or so equally join'd.

SONG

From Secret Love

I feed a flame within, which so torments me,
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die than once remove it.

Yet he for whom I grieve shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it:
Not a sigh, not a tear, my pain discloses,
But they fall silently, like dew on roses.

Thus to prevent my love from being cruel,
My heart's the sacrifice, as 't is the fuel:

And while I suffer this, to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, tho' he deny it.

On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me;
Where I conceal my love, no frown can fright me:
To be more happy, I dare not aspire;
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

1687

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead!"
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,

With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge! 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pain, and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared—
Mistaking earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,

The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

CHARACTERS FROM THE SATIRES

Achitophel

Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curſt;
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Reſtless, unfixed in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the ſtorms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would ſteer too nigh the sands to boaſt his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with wealth and honor bleſt,
Refuse his age the needful hours of reſt?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son,
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the ſtate;
To compass this the triple bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
Then, seized with fear, yet ſtill affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy ſtill it proves in factious times
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.

Zimri

Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent or over civil
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laughed himself from Court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel;
Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Og and Doeg

And hasten Og and Doeg to rehearse,
Two fools that crutch their feeble sense on verse,
Who by my Muse to all succeeding times
Shall live in spite of their own dogrel rhymes.
Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
Made still a blundering kind of melody;
Spurred boldly on, and dashed through thick and thin.
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;

Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And, in one word, heroically mad,
He was too warm on picking-work to dwell,
But faggoted his notions as they fell,
And, if they rhymed and rattled, all was well.
Spiteful he is not, though he wrote a satire,
For still there goes some thinking to ill-nature;
He needs no more than birds and beasts to think,
All his occasions are to eat and drink.
If he call rogue and rascal from a garret,
He means you no more mischief than a parrot;
The words for friend and foe alike were made,
To fetter them in verse is all his trade. . . .
Railing in other men may be a crime,
But ought to pass for mere instinct in him;
Instinct he follows and no farther knows,
For to write verse with him is to *transprose;*

'Twere pity treason at his door to lay
Who makes heaven's gate a lock to its own key;
Let him rail on, let his invective Muse
Have four and twenty letters to abuse,
Which if he jumbles to one line of sense,
Indict him of a capital offence.
In fire-works give him leave to vent his spite,
Those are the only serpents he can write;
The height of his ambition is, we know,
But to be master of a puppet-show;
On that one stage his works may yet appear,
And a month's harvest keeps him all the year.

Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,
For here's a tun of midnight work to come,
Og from a treason-tavern rolling home.
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great he sails behind his link.
With all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
For every inch that is not fool is rogue: . . .
When wine has given him courage to blaspheme,
He curses God, but God before cursed him;

And if man could have reason, none has more,
That made his paunch so rich and him so poor.
With wealth he was not trusted, for Heaven knew
What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew;
To what would he on quail and pheasant swell
That even on tripe and carrion could rebel?
But though Heaven made him poor, with reverence speaking,
He never was a poet of God's making;
The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull,
With this prophetic blessing—*Be thou dull;*
Drink, swear, and roar, forbear no lewd delight
Fit for thy bulk, do anything but write.
Thou art of lasting make, like thoughtless men,
A strong nativity—but for the pen;
Eat opium, mingle arsenic in thy drink,
Still thou mayest live, avoiding pen and ink.
I see, I see, 'tis counsel given in vain,
For treason, botched in rhyme, will be thy bane;
Rhyme is the rock on which thou art to wreck,
'Tis fatal to thy fame and to thy neck.
Why should thy meter good king David blast?
A psalm of his will surely be thy last.
Darest thou presume in verse to meet thy foes.
Thou whom the penny pamphlet foiled in prose?
Doeg, whom God for mankind's mirth has made,
O'ertops thy talent in thy very trade;
Doeg to thee, thy paintings are so coarse,
A poet is, though he's the poet's horse.
A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull
For writing treason and for writing dull;
To die for faction is a common evil,
But to be hanged for nonsense is the devil.
Hadst thou the glories of thy King exprest,
Thy praises had been satires at the best;
But thou in clumsy verse, unlicked, unpointed,
Hast shamefully defied the Lord's anointed:
I will not rake the dunghill of thy crimes,
For who would read thy life that reads thy rhymes?

But of king David's foes be this the doom,
May all be like the young man Absalom;
And for my foes may this their blessing be,
To talk like Doeg and to write like thee.

Sir Charles Sedley

1639?–1701

TO CELIA

Not, Celia, that I juſter am,
  Or better than the reſt!
For I would change each hour like them,
  Were not my heart at reſt.

But I am tied to very thee
  By every thought I have;
Thy face I only care to see,
  Thy heart I only crave.

All that in woman is adored
  In thy dear self I find;
For the whole sex can but afford
  The handsome and the kind.

Why then should I seek further ſtore
  And ſtill make love anew?
When change itself can give no more,
  'Tis easy to be true.

Matthew Prior

1664–1721

A BETTER ANSWER

Dear Chloe, how blubbered is that pretty face!
  Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all uncurled!
Prithee quit this caprice, and (as old Falstaff says)
  Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this world.

How canſt thou presume thou haſt leave to deſtroy
  The beauties which Venus but lent to thy keeping?
Those looks were designed to inspire love and joy;
  More ordinary eyes may serve people for weeping.

To be vexed at a trifle or two that I writ,
  Your judgment at once and my passion you wrong;
You take that for fact which will scarce be found wit:
  Od's life! must one swear to the truth of a song?

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shows
  The difference there is betwixt nature and art:
I court others in verse, but I love thee in prose;
  And they have my whimsies, but thou haſt my heart.

The god of us verse-men (you know, child), the sun,
  How after his journeys he sets up his reſt;
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run,
  At night he reclines on his Thetis's breaſt.

So when I am wearied with wandering all day,
  To thee, my delight, in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way;
  They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

Then finish, dear Chloe, this paſtoral war,
  And let us like Horace and Lydia agree;
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her
  As he was a poet sublimer than me.

AN ODE

The merchant, to secure his treasure,
  Conveys it in a borrowed name:
Euphelia serves to grace my measure,
  But Chloe is my real flame.

My softeſt verse, my darling lyre
  Upon Euphelia's toilet lay,
When Chloe noted her desire
  That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise;
  But with my numbers mix my sighs;
And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,
  I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes.

Fair Chloe blushed, Euphelia frowned,
  I sung and gazed, I played and trembled:
And Venus to the Loves around
  Remarked how ill we all dissembled.

Joseph Addison

1672–1719

HYMN

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly to the listening Earth
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing as they shine,
"The Hand that made us is divine."

Alexander Pope

1688–1744

ODE ON SOLITUDE

Happy the man whose wish and care
  A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
    In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
  Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
    In winter fire.

Bless'd who can unconcern'dly find
  Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
    Quiet by day;

Sound sleep by night: study and ease
  Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
    With Meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
  Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
    Tell where I lie.

CHARACTERS FROM THE SATIRES

Atticus

Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease,
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,

View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the reſt to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to ſtrike,
Juſt hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause:
While wits and Templars every sentence raise.
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but muſt laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

Sporus

Let Sporus tremble—— What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel,
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that ſtinks and ſtings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er taſtes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow ſtreams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad!
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now maſter up, now miss,

And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's temper thus the Rabbins have express'd,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest.
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

Wharton

Wharton! the scorn and wonder of our days,
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise:
Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
Women and fools must like him, or he dies:
Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke,
The club must hail him master of the joke.
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.
Then turns repentant, and his God adores
With the same spirit that he drinks and whores;
Enough if all around him but admire,
And now the punk applaud, and now the friar.
Thus with each gift of Nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
And most contemptible, to shun contempt;
His passion still, to covet general praise,
His life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;
A constant bounty which no friend has made;
An angel tongue, which no man can persuade;
A fool, with more of wit than half mankind,
Too rash for thought, for action too refined;
A tyrant to the wife his heart approves;
A rebel to the very king he loves;
He dies, sad outcast of each Church and State,
And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great.
Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule?
'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool.

Chloe

"Yet Chloe sure was form'd without a spot."—
Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.
"With every pleasing, every prudent part,
Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts, just as she ought,
But never, never reached one generous thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavor,
Content to dwell in decencies for ever.
So very reasonable, so unmoved,
As never yet to love, or to be loved.
She, while her lover pants upon her breast,
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
And when she sees her friend in deep despair,
Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair!
Forbid it, Heaven, a favor or a debt
She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
Safe is your secret still in Chloe's ear;
But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.
Of all her dears she never slander'd one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone.
Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her footman put it in her head.
Chloe is prudent—would you too be wise?
Then never break your heart when Chloe dies.

Henry Carey

1693?–1743

SALLY IN OUR ALLEY

Of all the girls that are so smart
  There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.
There is no lady in the land
  Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Her father he makes cabbage-nets
  And through the ſtreets does cry 'em;
Her mother she sells laces long
  To such as please to buy 'em:
But sure such folks could ne'er beget
  So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

When she is by, I leave my work,
  I love her so sincerely;
My maſter comes like any Turk,
  And bangs me moſt severely:
But let him bang his bellyful,
  I'll bear it all for Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days that's in the week
  I dearly love but one day—
And that's the day that comes betwixt
  A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm dreſt all in my beſt
  To walk abroad with Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

My maſter carries me to church,
  And often am I blamèd
Because I leave him in the lurch
  As soon as text is namèd;
I leave the church in sermon-time
  And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

When Chriſtmas comes about again,
  O then I shall have money;
I'll board it up, and, box and all,
  I'll give it to my honey:

I would it were ten thousand pound,
  I'd give it all to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

My master and the neighbors all
  Make game of me and Sally,
And, but for her, I'd better be
  A slave and row a galley;
But when my seven long years are out
  O then I'll marry Sally,—
O then we'll wed, and then we'll bed,
  But not in our alley!

William Shenstone

1714–1763

WRITTEN AT AN INN AT HENLEY

To thee, fair freedom! I retire
  From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
  Than the low cot or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless power I reign;
  And every health which I begin
Converts dull port to bright champagne;
  Such freedom crowns it, at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
  I fly from falsehood's specious grin!
Freedom I love, and form I hate,
  And choose my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter! take my sordid ore,
  Which lacqueys else might hope to win;
It buys, what courts have not in store,
  It buys me freedom at an inn.

Whoe'er has traveled life's dull round,
  Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
  The warmest welcome at an inn.

Thomas Gray

1716–1771

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
  And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
  And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
  The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
  Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
  Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
  The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
  The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
  No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
  How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
  And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour.
  The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to These the fault,
  If Memory o'er their Tomb no Trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn isle and fretted vault
  The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
  Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
  Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
  Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
  Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
  Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
  And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
  The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
  And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
  The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
  Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
  The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
  And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
  Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
  And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
  To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
  With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
  Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
  They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
  Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
  Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
  The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
  That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
  This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
  Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
  Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
  Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of the unhonored dead
  Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
  Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
  "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
  To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
  That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
  And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
  Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
  Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
  Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
  Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array
  Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
  Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
  A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
  And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
  Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
  He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

William Collins

1721–1759

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten ſtop, or paſtoral song,
May hope, chaſte Eve, to soothe thy modeſt ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon weſtern tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midſt the twilight path,
Againſt the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened ſtrain,

Whose numbers, ſtealing through thy darkening vale
May not unseemly with its ſtillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-ſtar arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, the elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with
sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy ear:

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile
Or upland fallows gray
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Of if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

ODE

Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!

When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

Oliver Goldsmith

1728–1774

SONG

From The Vicar of Wakefield

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
  And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy?
  What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
  To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
  And wring his bosom, is— to die.

William Blake

1757–1827

THE PIPER

Piping down the valleys wild,
  Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
  And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
  So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
  So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
  Sing thy songs of happy cheer:"
So I sang the same again,
  While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
  In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight,
  And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
  And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
  Every child may joy to hear.

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
  Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
  And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sung a little Clod of Clay,
  Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a Pebble of the brook
  Warbled out these meters meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
  To bind another to Its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
  And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose, thou art sick!
  The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
  In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
  Of crimson joy;
And his dark secret love
  Does thy life destroy.

THE TIGER

Tyger, tyger: burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand, and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, tyger: burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

AH, SUNFLOWER

Ah, Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveler's journey is done;
Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go!

THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I WENT to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midſt,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore;

And I saw it was fillèd with graves,
And tombſtones where flowers should be;
And prieſts in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

A POISON TREE

I WAS angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunnèd it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden ſtole,
When the night had veiled the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outſtretched beneath the tree.

From MILTON

And did those feet in ancient time
  Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
  On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
  Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
  Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold!
  Bring me my Arrows of desire!
Bring me my Spear! O clouds, unfold!
  Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
  Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
  In England's green and pleasant Land.

Robert Burns

1759–1796

HIGHLAND MARY

Ye banks and braes, and streams around
  The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods and fair your flowers,
  Your waters never drumlie!
There Summer first unfald her robes,
  And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel,
  O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay, green birk,
  How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
  I clasped her to my bosom!

The golden hours on angel wings
  Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
  Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and locked embrace
  Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
  We tore oursels asunder.
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
  That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
  That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
  I aft hae kissed sae fondly;
And closed for ay, the sparkling glance
  That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And moldering now in silent dust
  That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
  Shall live my Highland Mary.

SONG: MARY MORISON

O Mary, at thy window be!
  It is the wished, the trysted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see,
  That makes the miser's treasure poor.
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
  A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure—
  The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
  The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
  I sat, but neither heard nor saw:

Though this was fair, and that was braw,
  And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a':
  "Ye are na Mary Morison!"

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
  Who for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
  Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
  At least be pity to me shown:
A thought ungentle canna be
  The thought o' Mary Morison.

YE FLOWERY BANKS

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
  How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
  And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
  That sings upon the bough:
Thou minds me o' the happy days
  When my fause luve was true!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
  That sings beside thy mate:
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
  And wist na o' my fate!

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
  To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
  And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
  Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw my rose,
  But left the thorn wi' me.

OF A' THE AIRTS

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
  I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
  The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
  And monie a hill between,
But day and night, my fancy's flight
  Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers—
  I see her sweet an' fair.
I hear her in the tunefu' birds—
  I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonie flower that springs
  By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
  But minds me o' my Jean.

A RED, RED ROSE

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
  That's newly sprung in June.
O my luve is like the melodie,
  That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
  So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
  And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
  And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
  Though it were ten thousand mile!

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring ſtream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

Thou ſtock dove whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whiſtling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-creſted lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you, diſturb not my slumbering fair!

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding rills!
There daily I wander, as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild Evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy cryſtal ſtream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she ſtems thy clear wave!

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring ſtream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, diſturb not her dream!

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valor, the country of worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

Farewell to the mountains high-covered with snow,
Farewell to the ſtraths and green valleys below,
Farewell to the foreſts and wild-hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were firſt acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw,
But blessings on your froſty pow,
John Anderson my jo!

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

SONG: GREEN GROW THE RASHES

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweeteſt hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

There's nought but care on every han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An 'twere na for the lasses, O.

The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' though at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O,
An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly loved the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

TAM GLEN

My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len'.
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow
In poortith I might wak a fen'.
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie, the laird o' Dumeller:
"Guid-day to you," brute! he comes ben.
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
  And bids me beware o' young men.
They flatter, she says, to deceive me—
  But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
  He'll gie me guid hunder marks ten.
But if it's ordained I maun tak him,
  O, wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the valentines' dealing,
  My heart to my mou gied a sten,
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
  And thrice it was written, "Tam Glen"!

The last Halloween I was waukin
  My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken—
His likeness came up the house staukin,
  And the very gray breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come, counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry!
  I'll gie ye my bonie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
  The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And auld lang syne?

Cho.—For auld lang syne, my dear,
  For auld lang syne,
  We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
  For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
  And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
  For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,
  And pou'd the gowans fine,
But we've wandered monie a weary fit
  Sin' auld lang syne.

We two hae paidl'd in the burn
  Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roared
  Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
  And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
  For auld lang syne!

WILLIE BREWED A PECK O' MAUT

O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
An' Rob an' Allan cam to see.
Three blyther hearts that lee-lang night
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Cho.—We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley bree!

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
An' mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie:
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
What first beside his chair shall fa'
He is the King amang us three!

William Wordsworth

1770–1850

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
  Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the water, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games

Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
  Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!

—Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I TRAVELED among unknown men,
  In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
  What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
  Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
  To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
  The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
  Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
  The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
  That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
  I had no human fears;
She seemed a thing that could not feel
  The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
  She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
  With rocks, and stones, and trees.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

LONDON 1802

Milton! thou shouldſt be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of ſtagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadſt a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majeſtic, free,
So didſt thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowlieſt duties on herself did lay.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE SEPT. 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majeſty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully ſteep
In his firſt splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying ſtill!

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Breathless with adoration: the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
O if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power, around them
cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;

Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh
and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

ODE

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

I

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a ſtarry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am ſtrong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the ſteep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beaſt keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your feſtival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind.
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can

To make her Foſter-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a feſtival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or ſtrife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous ſtage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou beſt Philosopher, who yet doſt keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'ſt the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer bleſt!
On whom those truths do reſt,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness loſt, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Maſter o'er a Slave,
A Preſence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with ſuch earneſt pains doſt thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy bleſſedneſs at ſtrife?
Full ſoon thy Soul ſhall have her earthly freight,
And cuſtom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as froſt, and deep almoſt as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was ſo fugitive!
The thought of our paſt years in me doth breed
Perpetual benedictiion: not indeed
For that which is moſt worthy to be bleſt—
Delight and liberty, the ſimple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at reſt,
With new-fledged hope ſtill fluttering in his breaſt:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obſtinate queſtionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High inſtincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those firſt affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,

Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
  Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
      To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
      Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
      Hence in a season of calm weather
      Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
      Which brought us hither,
      Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

x

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
      And let the young Lambs bound
      As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
      Ye that pipe and ye that play,
      Ye that through your hearts to-day
      Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
  Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
      We will grieve not, rather find
      Strength in what remains behind;
      In the primal sympathy
      Which having been must ever be;
      In the soothing thoughts that spring
      Out of human suffering;
      In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Sir Walter Scott

1771–1832

SOLDIER, REST! THY WARFARE O'ER

From The Lady of the Lake

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
  Armor's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
  Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
  At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
  Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
  While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
  Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
  Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772–1834

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
  Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
    The shadow of the dome of pleasure
    Floated midway on the waves;
    Where was heard the mingled measure
    From the fountain and the caves.
  It was a miracle of rare device,
  A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

    A damsel with a dulcimer
    In a vision once I saw:
    It was an Abyssinian maid,
    And on her dulcimer she played,
    Singing of Mount Abora.
    Could I revive within me
    Her symphony and song,
    To such a deep delight 't would win me,
That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Charles Lamb

1775–1834

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why were not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Walter Savage Landor

1775–1864

ROSE AYLMER

Ah what avails the sceptered race,
  Ah what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
  Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
  May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
  I consecrate to thee.

PAST RUINED ILION

Past ruined Ilion Helen lives,
  Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
  Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
  Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
  These many summers you and me.

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

I strove with none; for none was worth my strife,
  Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
  It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

DIRCE

From Pericles and Aspasia

Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
  With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
  That he is old, and she a shade.

Thomas Love Peacock

1785–1866

THE WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR

From The Misfortunes of Elphin

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met a host, and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were brousing,
We made a nightly sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
We met them, and o'erthrew them:
They struggled hard to beat us;
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us:
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewild'ring,
Spilt blood enough to swim in:
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.

The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen;
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

George Gordon, Lord Byron

1788–1824

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
  Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
  Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
  How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
  So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
  But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
  A heart whose love is innocent!

SO, WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

So, we'll go no more a-roving
  So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
  And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
  And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
  And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
  And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
  By the light of the moon.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

1792–1822

TO ——

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The Champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;—
As I must on thine,
Oh, belovèd as thou art!

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out;
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,

And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noon-tide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

CHORUS FROM HELLAS

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;

Another Orpheus sings again,
  And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
  If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
  Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
  And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
  The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if naught so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
  Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
  Than many unsubdued:
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
  Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
  Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day.

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

John Keats

1795–1821

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
  But being too happy in thine happiness,—
  That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
    In some melodious plot
  Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
    Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
  Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
  Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
  Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
    With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
      And purple-stainèd mouth;
  That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
    And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
  What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
  Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
  Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
    Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
      And leaden-eyed despairs,
  Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
    Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
  Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
  Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
  And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
    Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
      But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
  As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
  Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
    Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
      In the next valley-glades:
  Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
    Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
  Thou foster-child of silence and slow time.
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
  A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
  Of deities or mortals, or of both,
    In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
    What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
  Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
  Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
  Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
    Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
  She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
    For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
  Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
  For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love; more happy, happy love!
  For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
    For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,
  That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
    A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
  To what green altar, O myſterious prieſt,
Lead'ſt thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
  And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
  Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
    Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy ſtreets for evermore
  Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
    Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
  Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With foreſt branches and the trodden weed;
  Thou, silent form, doſt tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Paſtoral!
  When old age shall this generation waſte,
    Thou shalt remain, in midſt of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'ſt,
  "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
    Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

TO AUTUMN

Season of miſts and mellow fruitfulness,
  Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
  With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
  And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core:
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
  And ſtill more, later flowers for the bees,
  Until they think warm days will never cease,
    For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy ſtore?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
  Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
    Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
  Steady thy laden head across a brook;
  Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
  Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
  And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
  Among the river sallows, borne aloft
    Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
  Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
  The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
    And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-pilèd books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace,
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
  Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
  And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
  So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
  And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
  With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
  Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
  Full beautiful—a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
  And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
  And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
  And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
  And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
  A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
  And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
  "I love thee true!"

She took me to her elfin grot,
  And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
  With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
  And there I dreamed—ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
  On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
  Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—"La Belle Dame sans Merci
  Thee hath in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
  With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
  On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
  Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake
  And no birds sing.

John Henry, Cardinal Newman

1801–1890

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
  Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home!
  Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
  Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
  Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1809–1892

MARIANA

With blackest moss the flower-pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:

The cock sung out an hour ere light;
  From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
  In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
  Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, "My life is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
  A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
  The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
  All silver-green with gnarlèd bark:
  For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
    She only said, "The night is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
  And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
  She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
  And wild winds bound within their cell,
  The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
    She only said, "My life is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
  The doors upon their hinges creaked;

The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
  Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
  Old faces glimmered through the doors,
  Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
    She only said, "My life is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
  The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
  The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
  When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
  Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
    Then said she, "I am very dreary,
      He will not come," she said;
    She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
      O God, that I were dead!"

SONG FROM MAUD

Come into the garden, Maud,
  For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
  I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
  And the musk of the rose is blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
  And the planet of love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
  On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
  To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
  The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirred
  To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
  And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, "There is but one,
  With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
  She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
  And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
  The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
  In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
  For one that will never be thine
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
  "Forever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
  As the music clashed in the Hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
  For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
  Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
  That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
  In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
  And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
  One long milk-bloom on the tree;

The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
  As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
  Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
  They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
  Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
  Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
  To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
  From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
  She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
  And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
  And the lily whispers, "I wait."

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
  Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
  Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
  Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her feet,
  And blossom in purple and red.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

SONGS FROM THE PRINCESS

I

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

2

The splendor falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Robert Browning

1812–1889

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

The rain set early in to-night,
  The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
  And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
  She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
  Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,

And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshiped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore

Her head, which droops upon it still:
  The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
  That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
  Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
  And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast,

The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stooped to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows?
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died
away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz
Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar
lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar
grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help
England?"—say
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise
and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,

As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.
Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim;
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

Arthur Hugh Clough

1819–1861

WHERE LIES THE LAND?

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild northwesters rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
  The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
  It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
  And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
  Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
  Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
  When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
  But westward, look, the land is bright.

Matthew Arnold

1822–1888

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
  And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
  Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
  She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
  And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
  In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
  And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay,
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Christina Rossetti

1830–1894

SONG

When I am dead, my dearest,
  Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
  Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
  With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
  And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
  I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
  Sing on, as if in pain;
And dreaming through the twilight
  That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
  And haply may forget.

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
  In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
  Is come, my love is come to me.

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

1837–1909

THE GARDEN OF PROSPERINE

Here, where the world is quiet,
  Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
  In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
  A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
  And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
  For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
  And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
  And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
  Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
  And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
  No heather-flower or vine
But bloomless buds of poppies,
  Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes,
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
  For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
  In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
  All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
  Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
  He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
  Nor weep for pains in hell;

Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes,
And well though love reposes,
  In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
  Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
  With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
  From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
  She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
  The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
  And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
  The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
  And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
  Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
  And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
  Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
  Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
  From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
  Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
  Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
  Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
  Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal:
Only the sleep eternal
  In an eternal night.

CHORUS

From Atalanta in Calydon

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
  The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
  With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
  The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
  Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
  With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
  Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
  Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
  Fire, or the ſtrength of the ſtreams that spring!
For the ſtars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen ſtars and the fallen cling to her,
  And the southweſt-wind, and the weſt-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
  And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
  The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And froſts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
  Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full ſtreams feed on flower of rushes,
  Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
  From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
  The cheſtnut-husk at the cheſtnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
  Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
  The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
  The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
  Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
  Her bright breaſt shortening into sighs;

The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
  The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

Thomas Hardy

1840–1928

DRUMMER HODGE

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest
  Uncoffined—just as found:
His landmark is a kopje-crest
  That breaks the veldt around;
And foreign constellations west
  Each night above his mound.

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew—
  Fresh from his Wessex home—
The meaning of the broad Karoo,
  The Bush, the dusty loam,
And why uprose to nightly view
  Strange stars amid the gloam.

Yet portion of the unknown plain
  Will Hodge for ever be;
His homely Northern breast and brain
  Grow to some Southern tree,
And strange-eyed constellations reign
  His stars eternally.

HAP

If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

LET ME ENJOY

(*Minor Key*)

Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.

About my path there flits a Fair,
Who throws me not a word or sign;
I'll charm me with her ignoring air,
And laud the lips not meant for mine.

From manuscripts of moving song
Inspired by scenes and dreams unknown,
I'll pour out raptures that belong
To other, as they were my own.

And some day hence, towards Paradise
And all its blest—if such should be—
I will lift glad, afar-off eyes,
Though it contain no place for me.

ON AN INVITATION TO THE UNITED STATES

My ardors for emprize nigh lost
Since Life has bared its bones to me,
I shrink to seek a modern coast
Whose riper times have yet to be;
Where the new regions claim them free
From that long drip of human tears
Which peoples old in tragedy
Have left upon the centuried years.

For, wonning in these ancient lands,
Enchased and lettered as a tomb,
And scored with prints of perished hands,
And chronicled with dates of doom,
Though my own Being bear no bloom
I trace the lives such scenes enshrine,
Give past exemplars present room,
And their experience count as mine.

Alice Meynell

1850–1923

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
  She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
  And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
  Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
  The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
  Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
  She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.

Alfred Edward Housman

1859–

WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN

With rue my heart is laden
  For golden friends I had.

For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

WHITE IN THE MOON

White in the moon the long road lies,
The moon stands blank above;
White in the moon the long road lies
That leads me from my love.

Still hangs the hedge without a gust,
Still, still the shadows stay:
My feet upon the moonlit dust
Pursue the ceaseless way.

The world is round, so travelers tell,
And straight though reach the track,
Trudge on, trudge on, 'twill all be well,
The way will guide one back.

But ere the circle homeward hies
Far, far it must remove:
White in the moon the long road lies
That leads me from my love.

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

FAR IN A WESTERN BROOKLAND

Far in a western brookland
  That bred me long ago
The poplars stand and tremble
  By pools I used to know.

There, in the windless night-time,
  The wanderer, marveling why,
Halts on the bridge to hearken
  How soft the poplars sigh.

He hears: long since forgotten
  In fields where I was known,
Here I lie down in London
  And turn to rest alone.

There, by the starlit fences,
  The wanderer halts and hears
My soul that lingers sighing
  About the glimmering weirs.

Rudyard Kipling

1865–

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old,
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
  The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
  On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Amen.

Ernest Dowson

1867–1900

VITAE SUMMA BREVIS SPEM NOS VETAT INCOHARE LONGAM

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
  Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
  We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
  Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
  Within a dream.

William Henry Davies

1870–

LEISURE

What is this life, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like stars at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

Walter de la Mare

1873–

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
  Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
  Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
  Above the Traveler's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
  "Is there anybody here?" he said.

But no one descended to the Traveler;
  No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
  Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
  That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
  To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
  That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in the air stirred and shaken
  By the lonely Traveler's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
  Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
  Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
  Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
  That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
  Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
  From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
  And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
  When the plunging hoofs were gone.

John Masefield

1878–

SONNET

From Lollingdon Downs

Here in the self is all that man can know
Of Beauty, all the wonder, all the power,
All the unearthly color, all the glow,
Here in the self which withers like a flower;

Here in the self which fades as hours pass,
And droops and dies and rots and is forgotten
Sooner, by ages, than the mirroring glass
In which it sees its glory still unrotten.
Here in the flesh, within the flesh, behind,
Swift in the blood and throbbing on the bone,
Beauty herself, the universal mind,
Eternal April wandering alone;
The God, the holy Ghost, the atoning Lord,
Here in the flesh, the never yet explored.

Aldous Huxley

1894-

FIRST PHILOSOPHER'S SONG

A POOR degenerate from the ape
Whose hands are four, whose tail's a limb,
I contemplate my flaccid shape
And know I may not rival him,

Save with my mind—a nimbler beast
Possessing a thousand sinewy tails,
A thousand hands, with which it scales,
Greedy of luscious truth, the greased

Poles and the coco palms of thought,
Thrids easily through the mangrove maze
Of metaphysics, walks the taut
Frail dangerous liana ways

That link across wide gulfs remote
Analogies between tree and tree;
Outruns the hare, outhops the goat;
Mind fabulous, mind sublime and free!

But oh, the sound of simian mirth!
Mind, issued from the monkey's womb,
Is still umbilical to earth,
Earth its home and earth its tomb.

Robert Graves

1895–

LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see,
Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man.
Across two counties he can hear,
And catch your words before you speak.
The woodlouse or the maggot's weak
Clamor rings in his sad ear;
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence:—drinking sound of grass,
Worm talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling holes in cloth:
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honor's sake,
Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin:
Whir of spiders when they spin.
And minute whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.
This man is quickened so with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.

IRISH

From the Gaelic

Colum-Cille

6th century

(Attributed)

FAREWELL TO IRELAND

Alas for the voyage, O High King of Heaven,
Enjoined upon me,
For that I was on the red plain of bloody Cooldrevin
Was present to see.

How happy the son is of Dima; no sorrow
For him is designed,
He is having, this hour, round his own hill in Durrow,
The wish of his mind.

The sound of the winds in the elms, like strings of
A harp being played,
The note of a blackbird that claps with the wings of
Delight in the shade.

With him in Ros-Grencha the cattle are lowing
At earliest dawn,
On the brink of the summer the pigeons are cooing
And doves in the lawn.

Three things am I leaving behind me, the very
Most dear that I know,
Tir-Leedach I'm leaving, and Durrow and Derry;
Alas, I must go!

Yet my visit and feasting with Comgall have eased me
At Cainneach's right hand,
And all but thy government, Eiré, have pleased me,
Thou waterful land.

(*Douglas Hyde*)

Hugh O'Donnell

16th century

(Attributed)

DARK ROSALEEN

O MY dark Rosaleen,
  Do not sigh, do not weep!
The priests are on the ocean green,
  They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope,
  Upon the ocean green;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health and help, and hope,
  My Dark Rosaleen.

O hills, and through dales,
  Have I roamed for your sake;
All yesterday I sailed with sails
  On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
  I dashed across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
Oh! there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lightened through my blood,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long in unrest,
  To and fro do I move,
The very soul within my breast
  Is wasted for you, love!
The heart in my bosom faints
  To think of you, my Queen,

My life of life, my saint of saints,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
  Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
  Like to the mournful moon.
But yet will I rear your throne
  Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

Over dews, over sands
  Will I fly for your weal
Your holy, delicate white hands
  Shall girdle me with steel.
At home in your emerald bowers,
  From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My fond Rosaleen!
You'll think of me through daylight's hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,
  I could plow the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
  To heal your many ills!
And one beamy smile from you
  Would float like light between

My toils and me, my own, my true,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

O! the Erne shall run red
  With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
  And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal, and slogan cry
  Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

O'Gnive

16th century

THE DOWNFALL OF THE GAEL

My heart is in woe,
And my soul deep in trouble,—
For the mighty are low,
And abased are the noble:

The Sons of the Gael
Are in exile and mourning,
Worn, weary, and pale
As spent pilgrims returning;

Or men who, in flight
From the field of disaster,
Beseech the black night
On their flight to fall faster;

Or seamen aghast
When their planks gape asunder
And the waves fierce and fast
Tumble through in hoarse thunder;

Or men whom we see
That have got their death-omen,—
Such wretches are we
In the chains of our foemen!

Our courage is fear,
Our nobility vileness,
Our hope is despair,
And our comeliness foulness.

There is mist on our heads,
And a cloud chill and hoary
Of black sorrow, sheds
An eclipse on our glory.

From Boyne to the Linn
Has the mandate been given,
That the children of Finn
From their country be driven.

That the sons of the king—
Oh, the treason and malice!—
Shall no more ride the ring
In their own native valleys;

No more shall repair
Where the hill foxes tarry,
Nor forth to the air
Fling the hawk at her quarry:

For the plain shall be broke
By the share of the stranger,
And the stone-mason's stroke
Tell the woods of their danger;

The green hills and shore
Be with white keeps disfigured,
And the Mote of Rathmore
Be the Saxon churl's haggard!

The land of the lakes
Shall no more know the prospect
Of valleys and brakes—
So transformed is her aspect!

The Gael cannot tell,
In the uprooted wildwood
And the red ridgy dell,
The old nurse of his childhood:

The nurse of his youth
Is in doubt as she views him,
If the wan wretch, in truth,
Be the child of her bosom.

We starve by the board,
And we thirst amid wassail—
For the guest is the lord,
And the host is the vassal.

Through the woods let us roam,
Through the wastes wild and barren:
We are strangers at home!
We are exiles in Erin!

And Erin's a bark
O'er the wide waters driven!
And the tempest howls dark,
And her side planks are riven!

And in billows of might
Swell the Saxon before her,—
Unite, oh, unite!
Or the billows burst o'er her!

(Sir Samuel Ferguson)

Egan O'Rahilly

18th century

LAMENT FOR BANBA

O my land! O my love!
What a woe, and how deep,
Is thy death to my long mourning soul!
God alone, God above,
Can awake thee from sleep,
Can release thee from bondage and dole!
Alas, alas, and alas!
For the once proud people of Banba!

As a tree in its prime,
Which the ax layeth low,
Didst thou fall, O unfortunate land!
Not by time, nor thy crime,
Came the shock and the blow.
They were given by a false felon hand!
Alas, alas, and alas!
For the once proud people of Banba!

O, my grief of all griefs
Is to see how thy throne
Is usurped, whilst thyself art in thrall!
Other lands have their chiefs,
Have their kings, thou alone
Art a wife, yet a widow withal!
Alas, alas, and alas!
For the once proud people of Banba!

The high house of O'Neill
Is gone down to the dust,
The O'Brien is clanless and banned;
And the steel, the red steel
May no more be the trust
Of the Faithful and Brave in the land!
Alas, alas, and alas!
For the once proud people of Banba!

True, alas! Wrong and Wrath
    Were of old all too rife.
Deeds were done which no good man admires
    And perchance Heaven hath
    Chastened us for the strife
And the blood-shedding ways of our sires!
    Alas, alas, and alas!
        For the once proud people of Banba!

But, no more! This our doom,
    While our hearts yet are warm,
Let us not over weakly deplore!
    For the hour soon may loom
    When the Lord's mighty hand
Shall be raised for our rescue once more!
    And all our grief shall be turned into joy
        For the still proud people of Banba!

(*James Clarence Mangan*)

Raferty

d. 1835

I AM RAFERTY

I AM Raferty the Poet
  Full of hope and love,
With eyes that have no light,
  With gentleness that has no misery.

Going west upon my pilgrimage
  By the light of my heart,
Feeble and tired
  To the end of my road.

Behold me now,
  And my face to the wall,
A-playing music
  Unto empty pockets.

(*Douglas Hyde*)

Anonymous

A POEM TO BE SAID ON HEARING THE BIRDS SING

A FRAGRANT prayer upon the air
My child taught me,
Awaken there, the morn is fair,
The birds sing free;
Now dawns the day, awake and pray,
And bend the knee;
The Lamb who lay beneath the clay
Was slain for thee.

(*Douglas Hyde*)

Thomas Moore

1779–1852

HOW OFT HAS THE BANSHEE CRIED

How oft has the Banshee cried!
How oft has death untied
Bright links that Glory wove,
Sweet bonds entwined by Love!
Peace to each manly soul that sleepeth;
Rest to each faithful eye that weepeth;
Long may the fair and brave
Sigh o'er the hero's grave!

We're fallen on evil days!
Star after star decays,
Every bright name that shed
Light o'er the land is fled.
Dark falls the tear of him that mourneth
Lost joy, or hope that ne'er returneth:
But brightly flows the tear
Wept o'er a hero's bier.

Quenched are our beacon lights—
Thou, of the Hundred Fights!

Thou, on whose burning tongue
Truth, peace and freedom hung!
Both mute—but long as valor shineth,
Or mercy's soul at war repineth,
So long shall Erin's pride
Tell how they lived and died.

Anonymous

THE WEARIN' O' THE GREEN

Oh, Paddy dear! and did ye hear the news that's goin' round?
The shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground!
No more St. Patrick's day we'll keep; his color can't be seen,
For there's a cruel law ag'in' the Wearin' o' the Green!

I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand,
And he said, "How's poor ould Ireland, and how does she stand?"
"She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen,
For they're hanging men and women there for the Wearin' o' the Green."

An' if the color we must wear is England's cruel red,
Let it remind us of the blood that Ireland has shed;
Then pull the shamrock from your hat, and throw it on the sod,
An' never fear, 'twill take root there, though under foot 'tis trod.

When law can stop the blades of grass from growin' as they grow,
An' when the leaves in summer time their color dare not show,
Then I will change the color, too, I wear in my caubeen;
But till that day, plaise God, I'll stick to the Wearin' o' the Green.

Katherine Tynan

1861–

THE DOVES

The house where I was born,
Where I was young and gay,
Grows old amid its corn,
Amid its scented hay.

Moan of the cushat dove,
In silence rich and deep;
The old head I love
Nods to its quiet sleep.

Where once were nine and ten
Now two keep house together;
The doves moan and complain
All day in the still weather.

What wind, bitter and great,
Has swept the country's face,
Altered, made desolate
The heart-remembered place?

What wind, bitter and wild,
Has swept the towering trees
Beneath whose shade a child
Long since gathered heartease?

Under the golden eaves
The house is still and sad,
As though it grieves and grieves
For many a lass and lad.

The cushat doves complain
All day in the still weather;
Where once were nine or ten
But two keep house together.

William Butler Yeats

1865–

TO AN ISLE IN THE WATER

Shy one, shy one,
Shy one of my heart,
She moves in the firelight
Pensively apart.

She carries in the dishes,
And lays them in a row.
To an isle in the water
With her would I go.

She carries in the candles,
And lights the curtained room,
Shy in the doorway
And shy in the gloom;

And shy as a rabbit,
Helpful and shy.
To an isle in the water
With her would I fly.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

THE EVERLASTING VOICES

O sweet everlasting Voices be still;
Go to the guards of the heavenly fold
And bid them wander obeying your will
Flame under flame, till Time be no more;
Have you not heard that our hearts are old,
That you call in birds, in wind on the hill,
In shaken boughs, in tide on the shore?
O sweet everlasting Voices be still.

THE COLD HEAVEN

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting Heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice,
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
So wild that every casual thought of that and this
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO NOTHING

Now all the truth is out,
Be secret and take defeat
From any brazen throat,
For how can you compete,
Being honor bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbors' eyes?

Bred to a harder thing
Than Triumph, turn away
And like a laughing string
Whereon mad fingers play
Amid a place of stone,
Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult.

George William Russell ("A. E.")

1867–

A MOUNTAIN WIND

The cold limbs of the air
Brush by me on the hill,
Climb to the utmost crag,
Leap out, then all is still.

Ah, but what high intent
In the cold will of wind;
What scepter would it grasp
To leave these dreams behind!

Trail of celestial things:
White centaurs, winged in flight,
Through the fired heart sweep on,
A hurricane of light.

I have no plumes for air:
Earth hugs to it my bones.
Leave me, O sky-born powers,
Brother to grass and stones.

A HOLY HILL

Be still: be still: nor dare
  Unpack what you have brought,
Nor loosen on this air
  Red gnomes of your thought.

Uncover: bend the head
  And let the feet be bare:
This air that thou breathest
  Is holy air.

Sin not against the Breath,
  Using ethereal fire
To make seem as faery
  A wanton desire.

Know that this granite height
  May be a judgment throne,
Dread thou the unmovable will,
  The wrath of stone.

THE LONELY

Lone and forgotten
Through a long sleeping,
In the heart of age
A child woke weeping.

No invisible mother
Was nigh him there
Laughing and nodding
From earth and air.

No elfin comrades
Came at his call,
And the earth and the air
Were blank as a wall.

The darkness thickened
Upon him creeping,
In the heart of age
A child lay weeping.

IMMORTALITY

We must pass like smoke or live within the spirit's fire;
For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return

If our thought has changed to dream, our will unto desire,
As smoke we vanish though the fire may burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the gray dusk of our days:
Surely here is soul: with it we have eternal breath:
In the fire of love we live, or pass by many ways,
By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

John Millington Synge

1871–1909

PRELUDE

Still south I went and west and south again,
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities, and the sights of men,
Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
The gray and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
In converse with the mountains, moors, and fens.

IN KERRY

We heard the thrushes by the shore and sea,
And saw the golden star's nativity,
Then round we went the lane by Thomas Flynn,
Across the church where bones lie out and in;
And there I asked beneath a lonely cloud
Of strange delight, with one bird singing loud,
What change you'd wrought in graveyard, rock and sea,
This new wild paradise to wake for me. . . .
Yet knew no more than knew those merry sins
Had built this stack of thigh-bones, jaws and shins.

Moira O'Neill

CORRYMEELA

Over here in England I'm helpin' wi' the hay,
And I wisht I was in Ireland the livelong day;
Weary on the English hay, an' sorra take the wheat!
Och! Corrymeela, an' the blue sky over it.

There's a deep dumb river flowin' by beyont the heavy trees,
This livin' air is moithered wi' the hummin' o' the bees;
I wisht I'd hear the Claddagh burn go runnin' through the heat,
Past Corrymeela, wi' the blue sky over it.

The people that's in England is richer nor the Jews,
There's not the smallest young gossoon but thravels in his shoes!
I'd give the pipe between me teeth to see a barefut child,
Och! Corrymeela, an' the low south wind.

Here's hands so full o' money an' hearts so full o' care,
By the luck o' love! I'd still go light for all I did go bare.
"God save ye, colleen dhas," I said; the girl she thought me wild!
Fair Corrymeela, an' the low south wind.

D'ye mind me now, the song at night is mortal hard to raise,
The girls are heavy goin' here, the boys are ill to plase;
When ones't I'm out this workin' hive, 'tis I'll be back again—
Aye, Corrymeela, in the same soft rain.

The puff o' smoke from one ould roof before an English town!
For a *shaugh* wid Andy Feelan here I'd give a silver crown,
For a curl o' hair like Mollie's ye'll ask the like in vain,
Sweet Corrymeela, an' the same soft rain.

Thomas MacDonagh

1878–1916

JOHN-JOHN

I DREAMT last night of you, John-John,
And thought you called to me;
And when I woke this morning, John,
Yourself I hoped to see;
But I was all alone, John-John,
Though still I heard your call;
I put my boots and bonnet on,
And took my Sunday shawl,
And went full sure to find you, John,
At Nenagh fair.

The fair was just the same as then,
Five years ago to-day,
Wen first you left the thimble-men
And came with me away;
For there again were thimble-men
And shooting galleries,
And card-trick men and maggie-men,
Of all sorts and degrees;
But not a sight of you, John-John,
Was anywhere.

I turned my face to home again,
And called myself a fool
To think you'd leave the thimble-men
And live again by rule,
To go to mass and keep the fast
And till the little patch;
My wish to have you home was past
Before I raised the latch
And pushed the door and saw you, John,
Sitting down there.

How cool you came in here, begad,
As if you owned the place!

But rest yourself there now, my lad,
'Tis good to see your face;
My dream is out, and now by it
I think I know my mind:
At six o'clock this house you'll quit,
And leave no grief behind;—
But until six o'clock, John-John,
My bit you'll share.

The neighbors' shame of me began
When first I brought you in;
To wed and keep a tinker man
They thought a kind of sin;
But now this three years since you've gone
'Tis pity me they do,
And that I'd rather have, John-John,
Than that they'd pity you,
Pity for me and you, John-John,
I could not bear.

Oh, you're my husband right enough,
But what's the good of that?
You know you never were the stuff
To be the cottage cat,
To watch the fire and hear me lock
The door and put out Shep—
But there, now, it is six o'clock
And time for you to step.
God bless and keep you far, John-John!
And that's my prayer.

Seumas O'Sullivan

1878–

THE STARLING LAKE

My sorrow that I am not by the little dún
By the lake of the starlings at Rosses under the hill,
And the larks there, singing over the fields of dew,
Or evening there and the sedges still.

For plain I see now the length of the yellow sand,
And Lissadell far off and its leafy ways,
And the holy mountain whose mighty heart
Gathers into it all the colored days.
My sorrow that I am not by the little dún
By the lake of the starlings at evening when all is still,
And still in whispering sedges the herons stand,
'Tis there I would nestle at rest till the quivering moon
Uprose in the golden quiet over the hill.

Padraic Pearse

1880–1916

IDEAL

Naked I saw thee,
O beauty of beauty!
And I blinded my eyes
For fear I should flinch.

I heard thy music,
O sweetness of sweetness!
And I shut my ears
For fear I should fail.

I kissed thy lips
O sweetness of sweetness!
And I hardened my heart
For fear of my ruin.

I blinded my eyes
And my ears I shut,
I hardened my heart
And my love I quenched.

I turned my back
On the dream I had shaped,
And to this road before me
My face I turned.

I set my face
To the road here before me,
To the work that I see,
To the death that I shall meet.

(*Translated from the Gaelic by Thomas MacDonagh*)

Padraic Colum

1881–

RIVER-MATES

I'LL be an otter, and I'll let you swim
A mate beside me; we will venture down
A deep, dark river, when the sky above
Is shut of the sun; spoilers are we,
Thick-coated; no dog's tooth can bite at our veins,
With eyes and ears of poachers; deep-earthed ones
Turned hunters; let him slip past
The little vole; my teeth are on an edge
For the King-fish of the River!

I hold him up
The glittering salmon that smells of the sea;
I hold him high and whistle!
Now we go
Back to our earths; we will tear and eat
Sea-smelling salmon; you will tell the cubs
I am the Booty-bringer, I am the Lord
Of the River; the deep, dark, full and flowing River!

A DROVER

To Meath of the pastures,
From wet hills by the sea,
Through Leitrim and Longford
Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness
Their slipping and breathing.
I name them the bye-ways
They're to pass without heeding.

Then the wet, winding roads,
Brown bogs with black water;
And my thoughts on white ships
And the King o' Spain's daughter.

O! farmer, strong farmer!
You can spend at the fair
But your face you must turn
To your crops and your care.

And soldiers—red soldiers!
You've seen many lands;
But you walk two by two,
And by captain's commands.

O! the smell of the beasts,
The wet wind in the morn;
And the proud and hard earth
Never broken for corn;

And the crowds at the fair,
The herds loosened and blind,
Loud words and dark faces
And the wild blood behind.

(O! strong men with your best
I would strive breast to breast
I could quiet your herds
With my words, with my words.)

I will bring you, my kine,
Where there's grass to the knee;
But you'll think of scant croppings
Harsh with salt of the sea.

Joseph Campbell

1881–

THE BLIND MAN AT THE FAIR

O to be blind!
To know the darkness that I know.
The stir I hear is empty wind,
The people idly come and go.

The sun is black, tho' warm and kind,
The horsemen ride, the ſtreamers blow
Vainly in the fluky wind,
For all is darkness where I go.

The cattle bellow to their kind,
The mummers dance, the jugglers throw,
The thimble-rigger speaks his mind—
But all is darkness where I go.

I feel the touch of womankind,
Their dresses flow as white as snow;
But beauty is a withered rind
For all is darkness where I go.

Laſt night the moon of Lammas shined,
Rising high and setting low;
But light is nothing to the blind—
All, all is darkness where they go.

White roads I walk with vacant mind,
White cloud-shapes round me drifting slow,
White lilies waving in the wind—
And darkness everywhere I go.

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
  In a holy place,
So is the beauty
  Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
  Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
  With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
  And her thoughts as ſtill
As the waters
  Under a ruined mill.

James Stephens

1882–

DEIRDRE

Do not let any woman read this verse;
It is for men, and after them their sons
And their sons' sons.

The time comes when our hearts sink utterly;
When we remember Deirdre and her tale,
And that her lips are dust.

Once she did tread the earth; men took her hand;
They looked into her eyes and said their say,
And she replied to them.

More than a thousand years it is since she
Was beautiful: she trod the living grass;
She saw the clouds.

A thousand years! The grass is still the same,
The clouds as lovely as they were that time
When Deirdre was alive.

But there has never been a woman born
Who was so beautiful, not one so beautiful
Of all the women born.

Let all men go apart and mourn together;
No man can ever love her; not a man
Can ever be her lover.

No man can bend before her; no man say—
What could one say to her? There are no words
That one could say to her!

Now she is but a story that is told
Beside the fire! No man can ever be
The friend of that poor queen.

THE DAISIES

In the scented bud of the morning—O,
  When the windy grass went rippling far,
I saw my dear one walking slow,
  In the field where the daisies are.

We did not laugh and we did not speak
  As we wandered happily to and fro;
I kissed my dear on either cheek,
  In the bud of the morning—O.

A lark sang up from the breezy land,
  A lark sang down from a cloud afar,
And she and I went hand in hand
  In the field where the daisies are.

THE GOAT PATHS

The crooked paths go every way
Upon the hill—they wind about
Through the heather in and out
Of the quiet sunniness.
And there the goats, day after day,
Stray in sunny quietness,
Cropping here and cropping there,
As they pause and turn and pass,
Now a bit of heather spray,
Now a mouthful of the grass.

In the deeper sunniness,
In the place where nothing stirs,
Quietly in quietness,
In the quiet of the furze,
For a time they come and lie
Staring on the roving sky.

If you approach they run away,
They leap and stare, away they bound,
With a sudden angry sound,
To the sunny quietude;

Crouching down where nothing stirs
In the silence of the furze,
Crouching down again to brood
In the sunny solitude.

If I were as wise as they,
I would stray apart and brood,
I would beat a hidden way
Through the quiet heather spray
To a sunny solitude;

And should you come I'd run away,
I would make an angry sound,
I would start and turn and bound
To the deeper quietude,
To the place where nothing stirs
In the silence of the furze.

In that airy quietness
I would think as long as they;
Through the quiet sunniness
I would stray away to brood
By a hidden, beaten way
In the sunny solitude,

I would think until I found
Something I can never find,
Something lying on the ground,
In the bottom of my mind.

James Joyce

1882–

I HEAR AN ARMY

I HEAR an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armor, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon my heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?

Joseph Plunkett

1887–1916

THE SPARK

Because I used to shun
Death and the mouth of hell
And count my battles won
If I should see the sun
The blood and smoke dispel,

Because I used to pray
That living I might see
The dawning light of day
Set me upon my way
And from my fetters free,
Because I used to seek
Your answer to my prayer
And that your soul should speak
For strengthening of the weak
To struggle with despair,

Now I have seen my shame
That I should thus deny
My soul's divinest flame,
Now shall I shout your name,
Now shall I seek to die.

By any hands but these
In battle or in flood,
On any lands or seas,
No more shall I spare ease,
No more shall I spare blood

When I have need to fight
For heaven or for your heart,
Against the powers of light
Or darkness I shall smite
Until their might depart,

Because I know the spark
Of God has no eclipse,
Now Death and I embark
And sail into the dark
With laughter on our lips.

Francis Ledwidge

1891–1917

LAMENT FOR THE POETS: 1916

I HEARD the Poor Old Woman say:
"At break of day the fowler came,
And took my blackbirds from their songs
Who loved me well thro' shame and blame.

No more from lovely distances
Their songs shall bless me mile by mile,
Nor to white Ashbourne call me down
To wear my crown another while.

With bended flowers the angels mark
For the skylark the place they lie,
From there its little family
Shall dip their wings first in the sky.

And when the first surprise of flight
Sweet songs excite, from the far dawn
Shall there come blackbirds loud with love,
Sweet echoes of the singers gone.

But in the lonely hush of eve
Weeping I grieve the silent bills."
I heard the Poor Old Woman say
In Derry of the little hills.

ARDAN MÓR

As I was climbing Ardan Mór
From the shore of Sheelin lake,
I met the herons coming down
Before the water's wake.

And they were talking in their flight
Of dreamy ways the herons go
When all the hills are withered up
Nor any waters flow.

AMERICAN

From the American Indian

LOVE SONG (Papago)

Early I rose
In the blue morning;
My love was up before me,
It came running up to me from the doorways of the
Dawn.

On Papago Mountain
The dying quarry
Looked at me with my love's eyes.

(*Mary Austin*)

NEITHER SPIRIT NOR BIRD (Shoshone)

Neither spirit nor bird;
That was my flute you heard
Last night by the river.
When you came with your wicker jar
Where the river drags the willows,
That was my flute you heard,
Wacoba, Wacoba,
Calling, Come to the willows!

Neither the wind nor a bird
Rustled the lupine blooms.
That was my blood you heard
Answer your garment's hem
Whispering through the grasses;
That was my blood you heard
By the wild rose under the willows.

That was no beast that stirred,
That was my heart you heard,
Pacing to and fro
In the ambush of my desire,
To the music my flute let fall.
Wacoba, Wacoba,
That was my heart you heard
Leaping under the willows.

(*Mary Austin*)

COME NOT NEAR MY SONGS (Shoshone)

Come not near my songs,
You who are not my lover,
Lest from out that ambush
Leaps my heart upon you!

When my songs are glowing
As an almond thicket
With the bloom upon it,
Lies my heart in ambush
All amid my singing;
Come not near my songs,
You who are not my lover!

Do not hear my songs,
You who are not my lover!
Over-sweet the heart is,
Where my love has bruised it,
Breathe you not that fragrance,
You who are not my lover.
Do not stoop above my song,
With its languor on you,
Lest from out my singing,
Leaps my heart upon you!

(*Mary Austin*)

LAMENT OF A MAN FOR HIS SON (Paiute)

Son, my son!
I will go up to the mountain
And there I will light a fire

To the feet of my son's spirit,
And there will I lament him;
Saying,
O my son,
What is my life to me, now you are departed?

Son, my son,
In the deep earth
We softly laid thee
In a chief's robe,
In a warrior's gear.
Surely there,
In the spirit land
Thy deeds attend thee!
Surely,
The corn comes to the ear again!
But I, here,
I am the stalk that the seed-gatherers
Descrying empty, afar, left standing.
Son, my son!
What is my life to me, now you are departed?

(*Mary Austin*)

THE GRASS ON THE MOUNTAIN (Paiute)

Oh, long long
The snow has possessed the mountains.

The deer have come down and the big-horn,
They have followed the Sun to the south
To feed on the mesquite pods and the bunch grass.
Loud are the thunder drums
In the tents of the mountains.
Oh, long, long
Have we eaten chia seeds
And dried deer's flesh of the summer killing.
We are wearied of our huts
And the smoky smell of our garments.

We are sick with desire of the sun
And the grass on the mountain.

(*Mary Austin*)

HUNTING-SONG (Navaho)

Comes the deer to my singing,
Comes the deer to my song,
Comes the deer to my singing.

He, the blackbird, he am I,
Bird beloved of the wild deer,
Comes the deer to my singing.

From the Mountain Black,
From the summit,
Down the trail, coming, coming now,
Comes the deer to my singing.

Through the blossoms,
Through the flowers, coming, coming now,
Comes the deer to my singing.

Through the flower dew-drops,
Coming, coming now,
Comes the deer to my singing.

Through the pollen, flower pollen,
Coming, coming now,
Comes the deer to my singing.

Starting with his left fore-foot,
Stamping, turns the frightened deer.
Comes the deer to my singing.

Quarry mine, blessed am I
In the luck of the chase.
Comes the deer to my singing.

Comes the deer to my singing,
Comes the deer to my song,
Comes the deer to my singing.

(*Natalie Curtis*)

SONG OF THE HORSE (Navaho)

How joyous his neigh!
Lo, the Turquoise Horse of Johano-ai,
How joyous his neigh!
There on precious hides outspread standeth he;
How joyous his neigh!
There on tips of fair fresh flowers feedeth he;
How joyous his neigh!
There of mingled waters holy drinketh he;
How joyous his neigh!
There he spurneth dust of glittering grains;
How joyous his neigh!
There in mist of sacred pollen hidden, all hidden he;
How joyous his neigh!
There his offspring may grow and thrive for evermore;
How joyous his neigh!

(*Natalie Curtis*)

SONG OF THE RAIN CHANT (Navaho)

Far as man can see,
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

From the Rain-Mount,
Rain-Mount far away,
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

'Mid the lightnings,
'Mid the lightning zigzag,
'Mid the lightning flashing,
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

'Mid the swallows,
'Mid the swallows blue,
Chirping glad together,
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

Through the pollen,
Through the pollen blest.
All in pollen hidden
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

Far as man can see,
Comes the rain,
Comes the rain with me.

(*Natalie Curtis*)

KOROSTA KATZINA SONG (Hopi)

1

Yellow butterflies
Over the blossoming virgin corn,
With pollen-painted faces
Chase one another in brilliant throng.

2

Blue butterflies
Over the blossoming virgin beans,
With pollen-painted faces
Chase one another in brilliant streams.

3

Over the blossoming corn,
Over the virgin corn
Wild bees hum;
Over the blossoming corn,
Over the virgin beans
Wild bees hum.

4

Over your field of growing corn
All day shall hang the thunder-cloud;
Over your field of growing corn
All day shall come the rushing rain.

(*Natalie Curtis*)

CORN-GRINDING SONG (Laguna)

Butterflies, butterflies,
Now fly away to the blossoms,
Fly, blue-wing,
Fly, yellow-wing,
Now fly away to the blossoms,
Fly, red-wing,
Fly, white-wing,
Now fly away to the blossoms,
Butterflies, away!
Butterflies, butterflies,
Now fly away to the blossoms.
Butterflies, away!

(*Natalie Curtis*)

THE VOICE THAT BEAUTIFIES THE LAND (Navaho)

1

The voice that beautifies the land!
The voice above,
The voice of the thunder,
Among the dark clouds
Again and again it sounds,
The voice that beautifies the land.

2

The voice that beautifies the land!
The voice below,
The voice of the grasshopper,
Among the flowers and grasses
Again and again it sounds,
The voice that beautifies the land.

(*Washington Matthews*)

SONG TO THE MOUNTAINS (Pawnee)

1

Mountains loom upon the path we take;
Yonder peak now rises sharp and clear;
Behold! It stands with its head uplifted,
Thither we go, since our way lies there.

2

Mountains loom upon the path we take;
Yonder peak now rises sharp and clear;
Behold! We climb, drawing near its summit;
Steeper grows the way and slow our steps.

3

Mountains loom upon the path we take;
Yonder peak that rises sharp and clear,
Behold us now on its head uplifted;
Planting there our feet, we stand secure.

4

Mountains loom upon the path we take;
Yonder peak that rose so sharp and clear,
Behold us now on its head uplifted;
Resting there at last we sing our song.

(*Alice C. Fletcher*)

A LOVER'S LAMENT (Tewa)

My little breath, under the willows by the water-side we used to sit,
And there the yellow cottonwood bird came and sang.
That I remember and therefore I weep.
Under the growing corn we used to sit,
And there the little leaf bird came and sang.
That I remember and therefore I weep.
There on the meadow of yellow flowers we used to walk.
Alas! how long ago that we two walked in that pleasant way.

Then everything was happy, but alas! how long ago.
There on the meadow of crimson flowers we used to
walk.
Oh, my little breath, now I go there alone in sorrow.

(*H. J. Spinden*)

THE COYOTE AND THE LOCUST (Zuñi)

Locust, locust, playing a flute,
Locust, locust, playing a flute!
Away up on the pine-tree bough,
Closely clinging,
Playing a flute,
Playing a flute!

(*Frank Cushing*)

OJIBWA WAR SONGS

1

Hear my voice, Birds of War!
I prepare a feast for you to feed on;
I see you cross the enemy's lines;
Like you I shall go.
I wish the swiftness of your wings;
I wish the vengeance of your claws;
I muster my friends;
I follow your flight.
Ho, you young men warriors,
Bear your angers to the place of fighting!

2

From the south they came, Birds of War—
Hark! to their passing scream.
I wish the body of the fiercest,
As swift, as cruel, as strong.
I cast my body to the chance of fighting.
Happy I shall be to lie in that place,
In that place where the fight was,
Beyond the enemy's line.

3

Here on my breast have I bled!
See—see! these are fighting-scars!
Mountains tremble at my yell!
I strike for life.

(*H. H. Schoolcraft*)

THREE SONGS FROM THE HAIDA

(Queen Charlotte's Island, British Columbia)

LOVE SONG

Beautiful is she, this woman,
As the mountain flower;
But cold, cold, is she,
Like the snowbank
Behind which it blooms.

THE BEAR'S SONG

(*Whoever can sing this one is admitted forever to the friendship of the bears*)

I have taken the woman of beauty
For my wife;
I have taken her from her friends.
I hope her kinsmen will not come
And take her away from me.
I will be kind to her.
Berries, berries I will give her from the hill
And roots from the ground.
I will do everything to please her.
For her I made this song and for her I sing it.

SONG FOR FINE WEATHER

O good Sun,
Look thou down upon us:
Shine, shine on us, O Sun,
Gather up the clouds, wet, black, under thy arms,—

That the rains may cease to fall.
Because thy friends are all here on the beach
Ready to go fishing—
Ready for the hunt.
Therefore look kindly on us, O Good Sun!
Give us peace within our tribe
And with all our enemies.
Again, again we call—
Hear us, hear us, O Good Sun!

(*Constance Lindsay Skinner*)

Ralph Waldo Emerson

1803–1882

THE RHODORA

On Being Asked, Whence Is the Flower?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plume to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

BRAHMA

If the red slayer think he slays,
  Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
  I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
  Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
  And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
  When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
  And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
  And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
  Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

CONCORD HYMN

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT, JULY 4, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
  Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
  And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
  Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
  Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
  We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their dead redeem,
  When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
  To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
  The shaft we raise to them and thee.

THE PROBLEM

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl;
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles:
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought,
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,

And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
Ever the fiery Pentecost
Girds with one flame the countless host,
Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
And through the priest the mind inspires.
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
I know what say the fathers wise,—
The Book itself before me lies,
Old *Chrysostom,* best Augustine,
And he who blent both in his line,
The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.
His words are music in my ear,
I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
And yet, for all his faith could see,
I would not the good bishop be.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent;
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep thee to-day,
To-morrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1807–1882

MY LOST YOUTH

Often I think of the beautiful town
  That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
  And my youth comes back to me.
    And a verse of a Lapland song
    Is haunting my memory still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
  And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
  Of all my boyish dreams.
    And the burden of that old song,
    It murmurs and whispers still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
  And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
  And the magic of the sea.
    And the voice of that wayward song
    Is singing and saying still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
  And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
  And the bugle wild and shrill.
    And the music of that old song
    Throbs in my memory still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
  How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
  Where they in battle died.
    And the sound of that mournful song
    Goes through me with a thrill:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
  The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
  In quiet neighborhoods.
    And the verse of that sweet old song,
    It flutters and murmurs still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
  Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
  Are longings wild and vain.
    And the voice of that fitful song
    Sings on, and is never still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
  There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
  And a mist before the eye.
    And the words of that fatal song
    Come over me like a chill:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
  When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
  As they balance up and down,
    Are singing the beautiful song,
    Are sighing and whispering still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
  And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
  I find my lost youth again.
    And the strange and beautiful song,
    The groves are repeating it still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

CHAUCER

An old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of plowed field or flowery mead.

Edgar Allan Poe

1809–1849

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
  And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
  Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober;
  The leaves they were crispèd and sere—
  The leaves they were withering and sere:
It was night, in the lonesome October
  Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
  In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
  In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
  Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
  Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
  As the scoriac rivers that roll—
  As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
  In the ultimate climes of the Pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
  In the realms of the Boreal Pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
  But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
  Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,
  And we marked not the night of the year—
  (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber,
  (Though once we had journeyed down here)
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
  Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
  And star-dials pointed to morn—
  As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
  And nebulous luster was born.

Out of which a miraculous crescent
  Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
  Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian;
  She rolls through an ether of sighs—
  She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
  These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
  To point us the path to the skies—
  To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
  To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
  With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
  Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
  Her pallor I strangely mistrust—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
  Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
  Wings till they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
  Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
  Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
  Let us on by this tremulous light!
  Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its sybillic splendor is beaming
  With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
  See! it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
  And be sure it will lead us aright:
We safely may trust to a gleaming
  That cannot but guide us aright,
  Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
  And tempted her out of her gloom—
  And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of a vista,
  But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
  By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
  On the door of this legended tomb?"
  She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume!—
  'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
  As the leaves that were crispèd and sere—
  As the leaves that were withering and sere;
And I cried—"It was surely October
  On *this* very night of last year
  That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
  That I brought a dread burden down here!
  On this night of all nights in the year,
  Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
  This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber—
  This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
  In a kingdom by the sea
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
  By the name of Annabel Lee;—
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
  Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
  I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs in Heaven
  Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
  My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsmen came
  And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
  In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
  Went envying her and me:—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
  In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud, by night,
  Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
  Of those who were older than we—
  Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in Heaven above,
  Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:—

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling,—my darling,—my life and my bride,
  In the sepulcher there by the sea—
  In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Henry David Thoreau

1817–1862

SMOKE

Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,
  Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight;
  Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,

Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou, my incense, upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

MIST

Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Dew-cloth, dream-drapery,
And napkin spread by fays;
Drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinth
The bittern booms and heron wades;
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

Walt Whitman

1819–1892

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it, and the moss hung down from the branches;
Without any companion it grew there, uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself;
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves, standing alone there, without its friend, its lover near—for I knew I could not;
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,

And brought it away—and I have placed it in sight in my room;
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them:)
Yet it remains to me a curious token—it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana, solitary, in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life, without a friend, a lover, near,
I know very well I could not.

A NOISELESS, PATIENT SPIDER

A NOISELESS, patient spider,
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood, isolated;
Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself;
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you, O my Soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,—seeking the spheres, to connect them;
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the ductile anchor hold;
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, O my Soul.

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

OUT of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wandered alone, bareheaded, barefoot,

Down from the showered halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother, form the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-aroused words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feathered guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
Maybe killed, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouched not on the nest,
Nor returned that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appeared again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glistened,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scalloped stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He called on his mate,
He poured forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes, my brother, I know,—
The rest might not, but I have treasured every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listened long and long.
Listened to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!

High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon, do not keep her from me any longer,

Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols!

But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

Hither, my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustained note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoyed elsewhere:
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

The aria is sinking.
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drowned secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird (said the boy's soul)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really
to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now
I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs,
clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within
me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from
me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was
before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there aroused, the fire, the sweet hell
within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you
sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whispered me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,

Lisped to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my aroused child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me, rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside)
The sea whispered me.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED

I

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
And the great star early drooped in the western sky at night,
I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!

O great star disappeared—O the black murk that hides
the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul
of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

III

In the dooryard fronting an old farmhouse near the
white-washed palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped
leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the
perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the
dooryard,
With delicate-colored blossoms and heart-shaped leaves
of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settle-
ments,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou wouldst surely
die.)

V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the
violets peeped from the ground, spotting the gray
débris,

Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inlooped flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veiled women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges poured around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

VII

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you, and the coffins all of you, O death.)

VIII

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walked,
As I walked in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you drooped from the sky low down as if to my side (while the other stars all looked on),
As we wandered together the solemn night (for something, I know not what, kept me from sleep),
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watched where you passed and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you, sad orb,
Concluded, dropped in the night, and was gone.

IX

Sing on, there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender! I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you;
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detained me,
The star, my departing comrade, holds and detains me.

X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These, and with these, and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing gaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

XII

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,

The varied and ample land, the South and the North in
the light, Ohio's shores and the flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies covered with grass
and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading, bathing all, the fulfilled noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the
stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

XIII

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant
from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.
Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon
depart),
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

XIV

Now while I sat in the day and looked forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields
of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its
lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturbed winds
and the storms),
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift pass-
ing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how
they sailed,

And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throbbed, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding, receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness.
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.
And the singer so shy to the rest received me,
The gray-brown bird I know received us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Soon or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Hove none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,
come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress!
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously
sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee, adornments and
feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscapes and the high-
spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful
night.
The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose
voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled
death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad
fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities all the teeming wharves
and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

XV

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes, spreading, filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence),
And the staffs all splintered and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffered not,
The living remained and suffered, the mother suffered,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffered,
And the armies that remained suffered.

XVI

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,

Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying, ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

Emily Dickinson

1830–1886

SUCCESS

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear.

A WOUNDED DEER LEAPS HIGHEST

A WOUNDED deer leaps highest,
I've heard the hunter tell;
'Tis but the ecstasy of death,
And then the brake is still.

The smitten rock that gushes,
The trampled steel that springs:
A cheek is always redder
Just where the hectic stings!

Mirth is the mail of anguish,
In which it cautious arm,
Let anybody spy the blood
And "You're hurt" exclaim!

EXCLUSION

THE soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

SUSPENSE

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That is can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door!

George Santayana

1863–

I WOULD I MIGHT FORGET THAT I AM I

I would I might forget that I am I,
And break the heavy chain that binds me fast,
Whose links about myself my deeds have cast.
What in the body's tomb doth buried lie
Is boundless; 'tis the spirit of the sky,
Lord of the future, guardian of the past,
And soon must forth, to know his own at last.
In his large life to live, I fain would die.
Happy the dumb beast, hungering for food,
But calling not his suffering his own;
Blessèd the angel, gazing on all good,
But knowing not he sits upon a throne;
Wretched the mortal, pondering his mood,
And doomed to know his aching heart alone.

AS IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE THERE IS ROOM

As in the midst of battle there is room
For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth;
As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom;
As in the crevices of Cæsar's tomb

The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth:
So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom.
For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth;
Till from that summer's trance we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

1869–

LUKE HAVERGAL

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,
And in the twilight wait for what will come.
The leaves will whisper there of her, and some,
Like flying words, will strike you as they fall;
But go, and if you listen she will call.
Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything:
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That blinds you to the way that you must go.
Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,
Bitter, but one that faith may never miss.
Out of a grave I come to tell vou this—
To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.
Go, for the winds are tearing them away,—
Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,
Nor any more to feel them as they fall;
But go, and if you trust her she will call.
There is the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
  But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
  And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
  Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
  And kept on drinking.

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered; and the song being done,
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

THE SHEAVES

Where long the shadows of the wind had rolled,
Green wheat was yielding to the change assigned;

And as by some vast magic undivined
The world was turning slowly into gold.
Like nothing that was ever bought or sold
It waited there, the body and the mind;
And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more the more it is not told.
So in a land where all days are not fair,
Fair days went on till on another day
A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,
Shining and still, but not for long to stay—
As if a thousand girls with golden hair
Might rise from where they slept and go away.

Amy Lowell

1874–1925

PATTERNS

I WALK down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.

I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Make a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion

Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground,
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and
the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he
clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—

I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'n night."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam," said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
He would have broken the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to
snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from
embrace
By each button, hook and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

Robert Frost

1875–

THE RUNAWAY

Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted at us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and gray,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."

And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him—at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off;—and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man—one man—can't keep a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

THE OVEN BIRD

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the leveled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly.

Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him.
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

Carl Sandburg

1878–

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

THREE SPRING NOTATIONS ON BIPEDS

1

The down drop of the blackbird,
The wing catch of arrested flight,
The stop midway and then off:
off for triangles, circles, loops
of new hieroglyphs—
This is April's way: a woman:
"O yes, I'm here again and your heart
knows I was coming."

2

White pigeons rush at the sun,
A marathon of wing feats is on:
"Who most loves danger? Who most loves
wings? Who somersaults for God's sake
in the name of wing power
in the sun and blue
on an April Thursday."

So ten winged heads, ten winged feet,
race their white forms over Elmhurſt.
They go faſt: once the ten together were
a feather of foam bubble, a chrysanthemum
whirl speaking to silver and azure.

3

The child is on my shoulders.
In the prairie moonlight the child's legs
hang over my shoulders.
She sits on my neck and I hear her calling
me a good horse.
She slides down—and into the moon silver of
a prairie ſtream
She throws a ſtone and laughs at the clug-clug.

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

1879–

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

(John P. Altgeld)

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the ſtone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day.
Now you were ended. They praised you . . . and laid you away.

The others, that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her cruſt, and the boy without youth,

The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame
and the poor,
That should have remembered forever, . . . Remember
no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they
call,
The loſt, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your
sons.
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming
began.
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the ſtone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its
own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man that kindled the
flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more than . . . to live in
a name.

Ezra Pound

1885–

THE GARDEN

En robe de parade.
Samain

Like a skein of loose silk blown againſt a wall
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington
Gardens,
And she is dying piece-meal of a sort of emotional
anæmia.

And round about there is a rabble
Of the filthy, ſturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.
She would like some one to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I will commit that indiscretion.

"H. D."

1886–

ADONIS

I

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
has passed through drift of wood-leaves
cracked and bent
and tortured and unbent
in the winter frost—
then burnt into gold points,
lighted afresh,
crisp amber, scales of gold-leaf,
gold turned and re-welded
in the sun-heat.

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us has crossed an old wood-path
and found the winter leaves
so golden in the sun-fire
that even the live wood-flowers
were dark.

II

Not the gold on the temple-front
where you stand
is as gold as this,
not the gold that fastens your sandal,
nor the gold reft

through your chiseled locks
is as gold as this last year's leaf,
not all the gold hammered and wrought
and beaten
on your lover's face,
brow and bare breast
is as golden as this.

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
stands apart, like you
fit to be worshiped.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir.

Robinson Jeffers

1887–

NIGHT

The ebb slips from the rock, the sunken
Tide-rocks lift streaming shoulders
Out of the slack, the slow west
Sombering its torch; a ship's light
Shows faintly, far out,
Over the weight of the prone ocean
On the low cloud.

Over the dark mountain, over the dark pinewood,
Down the long dark valley along the shrunken river,
Returns the splendor without rays, the shining of
shadow,

Peace-bringer, the matrix of all shining and quieter of
shining.
Where the shore widens on the bay she opens dark wings
And the ocean accepts her glory. O soul worshipful of
her
You like the ocean have grave depths where she dwells
always,
And the film of waves above that takes the sun takes also
Her, with more love. The sun-lovers have a blond
favorite,
A father of lights and noises, wars, weeping and
laughter,
Hot labor, lust and delight and the other blemishes.
Quietness
Flows from her deeper fountain; and he will die; and
she is immortal.

Far off from here the slender
Flocks of the mountain forest
Move among stems like towers
Of the old redwoods to the stream,
No twig crackling; dip shy
Wild muzzles into the mountain water
Among the dark ferns.

O passionately at peace you being secure will pardon
The blasphemies of glowworms, the lamp in my tower,
the fretfulness
Of cities, the crescents of the planets, the pride of the
stars.
This August night in a rift of cloud Antares reddens,
The great one, the ancient torch, a lord among lost
children,
The earth's orbit doubled would not girdle his greatness,
one fire
Globed, out of grasp the mind enormous; but to you
O Night
What? Not a spark? What flicker of a spark in the faint
far glimmer

Of a lost fire dying in the desert, dim coals of a sand-
pit the Bedouins
Wandered from at dawn. . . . Ah singing prayer to
what gulfs tempted
Suddenly are you more lost? To us the near-hand
mountain
Be a measure of height, the tide-worn cliff at the sea-
gate a measure of continuance.

The tide, moving the night's
Vastness with lonely voices,
Turns, the deep dark-shining
Pacific leans on the land,
Feeling his cold strength
To the outmost margins: you Night will resume
The stars in your time.

O passionately at peace when will that tide draw shore-
ward?
Truly the spouting fountains of light, Antares, Arcturus,
Tire of their flow, they sing one song but they think
silence.
The striding winter giant Orion shines, and dreams
darkness.
And life, the flicker of men and moths and wolf on the
hill,
Though furious for continuance, passionately feeding,
passionately
Remaking itself upon its mates, remembers deep inward
The calm mother, the quietness of the womb and the
egg,
The primal and the latter silences: dear Night it is
memory
Prophesies, prophecy that remembers, the charm of the
dark.
And I and my people, we are willing to love the four-
score years
Heartily; but as a sailor loves the sea, when the helm
is for harbor.

Have men's minds changed,
Or the rock hidden in the deep of the waters of the soul
Broken the surface? A few centuries
Gone by, was none dared not to people
The darkness beyond the stars with harps and habitations.
But now, dear is the truth. Life is grown sweeter and lonelier,
And death is no evil.

CONTINENT'S END

At the equinox when the earth was veiled in a late rain, wreathed with wet poppies, waiting spring,
The ocean swelled for a far storm and beat its boundary, the ground-swell shook the beds of granite.

I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray, the established sea-marks, felt behind me
Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the continent, before me the mass and doubled stretch of water.

I said: You yoke the Aleutian seal-rocks with the lava and coral sowings that flower the south,
Over your flood the life that sought the sunrise faces ours that has followed the evening star.

The long migrations meet across you and it is nothing to you, you have forgotten us, mother.
You were much younger when we crawled out of the womb and lay in the sun's eye on the tideline.

It was long and long ago; we have grown proud since then and you have grown bitter; life retains
Your mobile soft unquiet strength; and envies hardness, the insolent quietness of stone.

The tides are in our veins, we still mirror the stars, life is your child, but there is in me
Older and harder than life and more impartial, the eye that watched before there was an ocean.

That watched you fill your beds out of the condensation
of thin vapor and watched you change them,
That saw you soft and violent wear your boundaries
down, eat rock, shift places with the continents.

Mother, though my son's measure is like your surf-
beat's ancient rhythm I never learned it of you.
Before there was any water there were tides of fire, both
our tones flow from the older fountain.

Thomas Stearns Eliot

1888–

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

1892–

SONNET

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release

From dusty bondage into luminous air.
O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

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